

PENTHOUSE

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR MEN



THE SUMMER ISSUE

**WHO IS REALLY
TO BLAME FOR
ISLAMIC
EXTREMISM?**

**VLADMIR PUTIN'S
GRAB FOR POWER**

**INSIDE THE
AUSTRALIAN
PORN INDUSTRY**

**BLOWING THINGS
UP IN CAMBODIA**

**REVISITING THE
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**THE POLITICALLY
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FROM THE EDITOR

When I joined the Penthouse team, one of the things that got me really excited was the magazine's fantastic heritage. The highlight of this month was actually getting the opportunity to look through that very heritage when myself and Gavin Morrison, Penthouse's art director, spent an entire week going through a bunch of film negatives, searching for the very best summer shoots Penthouse has brought to you over the years.

The result is our "Endless Summer" photo story, in which we've reprinted some of the very best summer shoots from the '70s, '80s and '90s. It was a golden era, and it goes to show that Penthouse has a lot to be proud of. The photographers were simply the best in the business, the girls were gorgeous and (most importantly) the budgets were high!

And we're still doing great work. This month, Tony Veziris, a photographer from Sydney, photographed our stunning cover girl, Natalie, at a luxury house in the city's east, and we've got some great articles on, among other things, the devastating 2004 Boxing Day tsunami and its aftermath, the almost-too-crazy machine-gun tourism available in Cambodia, and – my favourite – an interview with one of Australia's most prominent pornographers about the ins and outs of our country's adult film industry.

On a more serious note, the Paris terror attacks gave us all pause. The fight against Islamic extremism is a complicated and generations-long struggle, and the tendency for politicians and the media to oversimplify it helps absolutely nobody.

Okay, so that was a bit heavy, wasn't it. But it can't all be fun.

I hope you enjoy this summer issue of Penthouse. It's a cracker.

James Branson

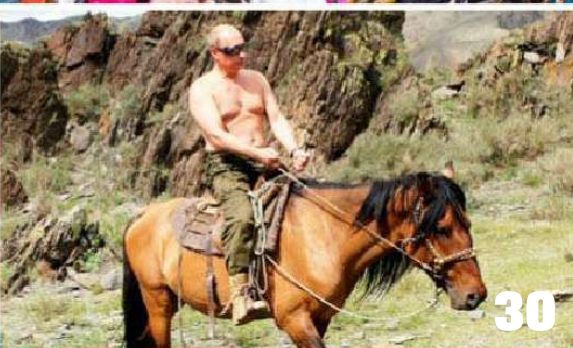


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PENTHOUSE

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SUBSCRIBE
AND GET UP TO
6 FREE ISSUES!
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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

WILL COLVIN

Will Colvin is a “journalist”, “songwriter”, “music producer”, and “website editor” from Sydney. He’s best known as the author of an infamous article called “All The Ways I Wasted Rupert Murdoch’s Money” that was published earlier this year and documented his time working for the website News.com.au. The article described his numerous hijinks, including getting drunk with escorts in his boss’s office, whilst on the payroll at the NewsCorp-owned website. Will is also the lead singer in middling alt/rock band Hedge Fund. Their latest clip, for the song “Boyfriend”, has a little over 1000 views on YouTube. Will is the son of famed ABC broadcaster and journalist Mark Colvin, a fact he never fails to remind people of.

JAMES MILLYNN

James is Penthouse’s video producer, and this month he went to Cambodia to shoot a whole load of AK47s, assault rifles, machine guns and rocket launchers with the Cambodian army. Sound fun? It most certainly was. In his spare time, James enjoys finding synergy and forward-facing solutions to integrated issue dynamics in fast-pace work environments. He is a firm believer in five-sided thinking, and takes a keen interest in the way transparency can be achieved in logic-orientated systems. James is currently working on a grid-based methodology for Penthouse’s sales matrix, which is an exciting project that we’re sure will bring about greater efficiency in all quarters of the business. The results so far have been extraordinary! In fact, so focused is James on achieving maximum transparency that he’s been given full access to our business systems. Thanks again for everything, James, and good luck!

ROB SCOTT

Rob is a writer from Sydney. He mostly writes about sex and politics, and has keen interest in quantum mechanics. His most famous article to date was about an orgy he attended with his mother’s best friend, a woman who used to babysit him when he was ten years old. He’s currently clear of any STDs.



SAMMIE CHADWICK

Sammie talks a lot. We mean a lot. Like you’ll be having a meeting about something and up she’ll pop with some irrelevant story about something that happened on reality TV last night. Please, Sammie, stop interrupting us. Other than that, she’s pretty sweet. Okay, what else to say here? We have to fill some space, because right now this page has about half as much text as it should because we decided to redesign it literally an hour before going to print. Sammie is Asian. Can we say that? It’s a fact, and describing somebody as Asian isn’t inherently racist, right? It’s just her heritage. Okay, sweet, I guess we can say that. I think we’ve filled enough space now.

ELSA MCGRATH

Elsa McGrath used to go out with our editor, which is how she got the gig writing for Penthouse, frankly. Not really, she got the job because she’s a great writer who knows a thing or two about the world. She’s also an excellent artist and does a mean tattoo. Just yesterday, our editor went over to her house, she sticky-taped a needle to a pencil and gave him three tattoos, one of which was the name of his best mate in braille. Unfortunately, it was spelled incorrectly. In her practise as an artist, Elsa makes miniature paper dolls, drawn on charcoal and made to look like religious iconography, which is really cool. The best part is that she draws them on chocolate packets.

TONI VEZIRIS

Tony Veziris is a photographer from Greece, but who wants to live there right now with the economy the way it is? I mean really, nobody in Greece has the cash to hire photographers, amirite? Tony photographed this month’s cover shoot.

This month’s contributors page is a competition! Simply match the contributor’s name to the photo, then answer the following question: Who was the most recent Australian Prime Minister not to have finished high school? Send in your answers to jamesb@phpublications.com and you could win a thankful phone call from the Editor of Penthouse.



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EVENT PLANNER

FIELD DAY

1 JANUARY

The Domain, Sydney

Just in case your New Years Eve celebrations weren't big enough, your hangover isn't epic enough and you'dw like to kick on some more, you can always try turning up to Field Day, the completely mental New Years Day celebration held in Sydney's domain. Not for the faint hearted.

WEIRD AL YANKOVICH

2 JANUARY

Enmore Theatre

The biggest-selling comedy recording artist in history will be bringing his Mandatory World Tour to Australia in January! Weird Al Yankovic - the undisputed king of pop culture parody and a favourite with Australian audiences - will kick off 2016 with a jam-packed Australia/New Zealand tour, starting in Sydney on January 2.

The Mandatory World Tour follows in the wake of the massive success of Al's 14th studio album, Mandatory Fun. Released in 2014, the album features parodies of Pharrell Williams' "Happy" ("Tacky"), Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines" ("Word Crimes"), Lorde's "Royals" ("Foil"), Iggy Azalea's "Fancy" ("Handy") and Imagine Dragons' "Radioactive" ("Inactive")

FLICKERFEST

8-17 JAN

Bondi Beach

Flickerfest began as a small local festival at the Balmain High School in 1991. Over the last 23 years it has grown to become Australia's only Academy accredited & BAFTA recognised competitive International Short Film Festival, with entries coming from filmmakers across the globe. Flickerfest presents a huge range of cash &

industry-supported prizes to competitors, and has been the starting point for many young Australian filmmakers.

TRUCKFIGHTERS

9 JANUARY

Prince Bandroom, St Kilda

After a near sold out 2015 Australian tour Swedish Fuzz rockers 'Truckfighters' are bringing back the Fuzz. The Trio have been a staple on the international touring circuit since their last trip down under with shows in Sweden, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, Belgium, USA, gracing the stages of major festivals such as Open Air, Hellfest, Pukkelpop, Frequency, Rock Im Revier, Free & East, Roadkill & more. Even with this jaw dropping list of ultimate festivals & performances the Truck fighters are psyched to be returning to the Land of

Oz; Truckfighters will be bringing their manic, sweaty all encompassing live show to the following venues. Make sure to get your tickets early as these shows will sell out..

LANIE LANE

15 JANUARY

The Gasometer Hotel, Collingwood

Lanie Lane has announced a run of intimate summer gatherings for her closest fans after spending this year travelling solo through the Aussie outback. During this time, Lanie has been reassessing her approach to life and music. She now has some beautiful new songs and stories to share with everyone who has been so supportive of her choice to take a big step back from the music industry. Maintaining an independent and authentic connection with her fan base is what these shows are all about. Lanie is also excited to share a body of work of

her visual art which will be available exclusively at these gatherings - including some special one-off pieces. Tickets will sell fast in these intimate spaces so get in quick.

MEAT STOCK

13-14 FEBRUARY

Sydney Showgrounds

What better way to spend valentines day than by chewing on large slabs of meat. Meatstock, a new festival dedicated to all things carnivore, is a rolling into town. There's going to be meat, drinks, meat, beer, people, meat, meat, probably some kids, meat, some protesting vegans, meat, and, let's not forget, some meat. The festival will also be home to a number guest chefs, including Tuffy 'The Professor' Stone. Don't know who that is? Oh, he's only the best barbecue chef in America and Judge of the reality TV show BBQ Pitmasters. Did anybody say there's meat here?

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**RACING A PLANE
WITH A JETPACK**

APOCALYPSE NOW

**THE WAR ON
LANGUAGE**

**THE PARIS
ATTACKS**



THE ENFORCER

PAGE 30: VLADMIR PUTIN IS INTENT ON RESTORING RUSSIAN POWER.

PHEROMONE PARTIES ARE NOW A THING



Scientists have known for years that a person's scent is a major player in creating a sexual or romantic connection. Artist Judith Prays took note of this fact and created a matchmaking event based on the concept. Pheromone Parties, as they are known, work by having guests sleep in the same t-shirt for three consecutive nights, building up the natural muskiness contained within the shirt's fibers, before bringing it to the party in a ziplock bag. Each bag is coloured blue or pink and assigned a secret number so that sniff-happy guests can explore the

contents like an anonymous bloodhound. Once a possible mate has been tracked down, partygoers pose for a photo with their chosen bag, which is then projected up onto the wall so that the owner of the bag can get a glimpse at what could be. And not to worry if you miss out on meeting your soul mate at the gathering! The bag selfies are put up on Facebook for you to browse later at your leisure. Instead of splashing on aftershave and cologne maybe all you need to do in order to get the gal is not shower for four days.

The nose knows!



PASTAFARIAN WOMAN WINS RIGHT TO WEAR COLANDER ON HEAD



There are some pretty insane religions out there. One of the craziest, and arguably most fun, has existed in secrecy for a while now and only recently emerged into the mainstream. It is known simply as The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

Hailed as the world's most peaceful religion, devout Pastafarians believe that an invisible alien made of

spaghetti and meatballs created the universe after getting drunk one night; that it was pirates who were the original church members; and that FSM Heaven contains a Beer Volcano and Stripper Factory.

It's no wonder then that US woman Lindsay Miller wanted to be join the congregation and follow the teachings of Pastafarianism.

She recently won an appeal against the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles for her right to wear a colander on her head in her license photo.

The spaghetti strainer falls under the state's rules regarding the wearing of religious headwear in government documentation.

Praise be to Flying Spaghetti Monster!



JAIL TIME FOR MAN WHO PUNCHED SISTER'S TEETH OUT OVER JOHN LENNON CHRISTMAS RECORD 40 YEARS AGO

Arguably the best Christmas record ever made is John Lennon and Yoko Ono's Happy Xmas (War Is Over), closely followed by James Brown's Funky Christmas.

But is it worth punching your sister's teeth out over? For Englishman Patrick Ackroyd the answer to that question was yes.

In 1975, a dispute broke out between Ackroyd and his sister Anita over the Lennon and Ono classic, which led to Patrick striking Anita so hard in the face that her two front teeth were knocked out. She's been wearing a dental plate ever since.

Not wanting to ruin Christmas morning for the fam, the teenage siblings were told by their mother to lie about what happened and instead spin the story that Anita tripped and fell.

Forty years later, as police were investigating an unrelated matter, the tooth came out (thank you, I'll be here all week!)

The now sixty-one year old Patrick admitted in a police interview to punching his sister in the mouth and causing her Chrissy morning injuries.

He pleaded guilty and was given a two-month prison sentence. Merry Christmas!



HALF OF WORLD'S MUSEUM SPECIMANS WRONGLY LABELLED

Museums have long been known as hubs of human knowledge. They're the places we take young children, with their little spongy minds, to learn about everything from the Avalonia to the Zephyrosaurus. Or so we believed.

It turns out that up to half of the world's natural history specimens in our museums are wrongly labelled.

According to experts at Oxford University and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, the confusion has arisen partly due to the overwhelming number of specimens that can arrive at one time, as well as the similarity between certain plants and insects that even accomplished naturalists struggle to tell apart.

"Many areas in the biological sciences, including academic studies of evolution and applied conservation, are underpinned by accurate naming," said Dr Robert Scotland of the Department of Plant Sciences at Oxford.

"Without accurate names on specimens, the records held in collections around the world would make no sense, as they don't correspond to the reality outside."

Experts are concerned that due to the age of online information, the previously benign misidentification has become a malignant cancer spreading violently throughout the body of science. Yes, *violently*.

OXFORD 'WORD' OF THE YEAR GOES TO AN EMOJI



This is what we've come to? Is this what the future holds for language? I'm not sure if I'm ready. The Oxford Dictionary this week announced the winner of its annual Word of the Year, and for the very first time, the prize was not awarded to a word. Instead the victor was the humble and ever popular emoji.

'Face with Tears of Joy' won out over other classic words such as adblocker, refugee, Brexit, lumbersexual, fleek, and

Dark Web.

Oxford Dictionary representatives said the emoji was chosen as the winner as it best reflected the ethos, mood, and preoccupations of 2015.

Is this the death of modern language as we know it? Will we all be reduced to drawing pictures to communicate? 'Winking smiley face with tongue out', 'love heart eye face', 'monkey with hands over ears'?

I guess it worked for the Egyptians.



FIREFIGHTER GETS WORLD'S MOST EXTENSIVE FACE TRANSPLANT

While tackling a house fire in 2001, volunteer firefighter Pat Hardison from Mississippi burnt his face so horrifically that young children – including his own – ran away screaming at the sight of him.

He has now undergone the riskiest face transplant ever carried out, which held only a 50 percent chance of survival for the forty-one year old.

During a routine rescue, Hardison became trapped when a flaming roof collapsed around him. He then told of how his mask melted to his face. When he pulled it off, his skin came with it. Damn.

Hardison spent sixty-three days in hospital where doctors tried to rebuild his face with skin and flesh taken from his thighs, but due to the extent of the burns, he lost his lips, nose, ears and the use of his eyelids.

Hardison underwent seventy-one

operations in the following years, but none gave him the regular appearance he so desperately wanted.

Then, in 2014, he was finally placed on the waiting list for a face transplant at NYU Langone Medical Centre in New York.

A year later, a donor matching Hardison's skin colour, hair colour, blood type, and skeletal structure was found in twenty-six year old David Rodebaugh, who was tragically killed in a cycling crash.

The transplant took over twenty-six hours to complete, and required a team of more than one-hundred doctors, nurses, technical and support staff.

Hardison is still recovering three months later and will be on medication for the rest of his life to prevent his body rejecting the transplant, but is expected to regain normal vision for the first time in over a decade. His plans now include motivational speaking and helping wounded veterans.



PARTY DRUG SPECIAL K, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS KETAMINE, IS NOW BEING USED TO TREAT PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS.

What do you do when the Zoloft, Celexa, Prozac, Wellbutrin, Seroquel, Cymbalta, Lamictal, Trazodone, Effexor, Zyprexa, and Latuda don't work?

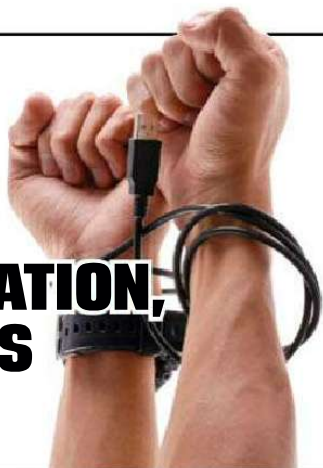
You go for a ketamine infusion, of course.

Best known as the party drug Special K – and often used to cut ecstasy tablets – K is currently causing a bit of a stir on the psychiatric scene for its ability to alleviate the symptoms of severe depression and PTSD.

Long used as an animal tranquiliser and clinical anaesthetic (most extensively on the battlefields of the Vietnam war), ketamine is now being hailed as a powerful tool in psychiatric treatment regimes.

Patients reported feeling alleviation of symptoms for a few days, which then increased to weeks and then several months with subsequent injections of a drug that is perhaps best known for causing your mate Steve to forget how to walk for two hours.

GAMING REDUCES RATE OF MASTURBATION, STATISTICS SHOW



A statistical analysis published by Pornhub has disclosed a 10% drop in its average viewership directly after the release of Fallout 4. This highly anticipated sequel has seemingly curbed the average man's habit for relentlessly choking his chicken for several hours between 5am and 3pm, and again from 5pm and 9pm.

It seems that some people may actually prefer to spend some quality hours walking around a post-apocalyptic wasteland, as opposed to drowning their despair with a good penile thrashing. Disclaimer: the stats only cover Pornhub's "Gaming Fan" demographic, so the truth is that it wasn't really a blip on the radar for World Wanking Community at large.



MAN ARRESTED ATTEMPTING TO SMUGGLE BEER DISGUISED AS PEPSI INTO SAUDI ARABIA

There's nothing like an ice-cold bevvvy on a hot day, but sometimes when you live in the desert, that might not be an option, especially now that a man was has been apprehended on the Saudi Arabian border attempting to smuggle 48,000 cans of beer disguised as Pepsi.

The cans were covered in a convincing plastic wrapping emulating the Arabic Pepsi can logo and script, but did not escape those pesky customs authorities, who discovered the stash in a routine border vehicle inspection on the Al Batha border

Alcohol is treated as a narcotic in Saudi Arabia, and possession can land you in jail for more than a few years – or earn you a good old fashioned public flogging.

According to a report published by Amnesty international, Saudi Arabia this year had the highest recorded number of executions in two decades, almost half of those being foreign nationals. In fact, an Australian grandfather was jailed for six months and flogged 28 times earlier this year.

Punishments vary depending on the status and nationality of the offender, but it's safe to say that the driver is probably not kicking back enjoying a cold one at this moment.

To compensate for a growing trend of western-centric culture in Saudi Arabia, you can enjoy a non-alcoholic beer for an average of three riyals – about \$1.10

If you're not too faint of heart you can purchase a bottle of spirits on the black market for about \$150, but we don't recommend it.

NO FINE FOR DRIVERLESS CAR

Are ghosts real? No. But robots are amongst us. A car was stopped this month in Northern California when an officer determined it was travelling far too slow. When he managed to somehow get the vehicle to pull over, the officer realised there was nobody at the driver's seat: The car was a Google Autonomous Vehicle going through test procedures on public roads on a sunny Thursday.

The officer informed the passenger that a driver must be behind the wheel of a self-driving vehicle, however he was unsure of how to issue a citation to a car.

The car's had in fact been capped at a speed of 25mph (40km/h) for safety reasons, and in the end the officer chose not to issue a fine as the car had broken no laws.

"We want them to feel friendly and approachable, rather than zooming scarily through neighborhood streets" a spokesman for Google said in a statement.

"After 1.2 million miles of autonomous driving (that's the human equivalent of 90 years of driving experience), we're proud to say we've never been ticketed!"



ABSOLUTELY INSANE MEN DECIDE TO RACE PLANE WITH JETPACKS OVER DUBAI

Two men with a clear death wish and astronomical life insurance policies (probably) have decided that yes, racing a jumbo jet whilst wearing jetpacks is an amazing idea.

Yes Rossy and Vince Reffet pulled off the stunt over the skies of Dubai, flying next to an Airbus A380 – the world's

largest passenger jet – at over 4000ft.

The flight was conducted in partnership with Emirates Airlines, but that doesn't make it any less mental. The duo conducted formations on both sides of the aircraft, which is capable of speeds up to one-thousand kilometres per hour.

Check out the footage on YouTube –

it looks both effortless and absolutely insane. We here at Penthouse prefer the more regular, safe modes of travel like being shot out of a cannon, drunk helicopter flights and teleportation, thankyou very much, but you've got admire the sheer size of Rossy and Reffet's balls here.



GET THE PICTURE

BONDI BEACH SYDNEY

About a year ago I was at a party at Bondi with a few people I hardly knew. Despite normally being chronically unable to speak to women, for some us-yet-unknown-but-entirely-miraculous reason I was absolutely killing it on this particular night. My jokes were coming off, my anecdotes entertained... at one point I found myself regaling some unremembered tale to five – yes, five – beautiful women. For a short time, I was superman.

Around 2am myself and three girls, all of us rather inebriated, decided to go swimming. Of course, by the time we arrived at the shore, all clothes had been forgotten and there I was, laughing my arse off, frolicking like a child in the water with three absolutely gorgeous femmes. Afterwards, we sat on the sand and I treated them to some entirely out-of-tune renditions of various Beatles songs. They were all rather impressed. So was I, to be completely honest.

We all fell asleep on the shoreline, and at 6am I was awoken by a dog attempting to lick my face.

There was a point to this story, I believe. Oh yeah, Bondi is amazing during the summer. ☺







CRUSH

KITA

When she's not surfing, this Australian singer writes wistful, sophisticated pop songs that are never too far removed from the ocean. Her music has a sense of self-awareness that belies her 19 years: she knows these youthful moments are fleeting, so she bottles them up in all their sun-dappled glory.

Her first single, *My Own War*, premiered in May this year with a video that perfectly captures her free spirit and DIY approach. There's backyard barbecues, cool parties, skating in car parks, and lots of surfing — it's a no filter snapshot into Kita's world.

After getting picked up by BBC Radio 1 in the UK and Triple J, *My Own Way* has since amassed more than 160,000 YouTube views. It's safe to say that this carefree surfer from rural Australia is starting to make her mark on the world. "I think I've spent two weeks at home all year," she jokes. 

Check out Kita's new EP, *Like You Want To*, now.

The poster features a stylized, painterly illustration of a snowy mountain landscape. In the foreground, a group of silhouetted figures in winter coats and hats are walking up a steep, snow-covered path. The path is marked with footprints and some red splatters, suggesting blood. In the background, a small wooden cabin with a chimney is perched on a snowy ridge, with smoke rising from it. The surrounding area is filled with tall, dark evergreen trees under a hazy, snow-filled sky. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, whites, and greys, with the red splatters providing a stark contrast.

THE 8TH FILM BY
QUENTIN TARANTINO

THE HATEFUL 8

NO ONE COMES UP HERE
WITHOUT A DAMN
GOOD REASON
IN CINEMAS JANUARY

FILMED IN
ULTRA
PANAVISION 70
GLORIOUS

Check the Classification

thehateful8movie.com.au

 Roadshow Films


TWC
THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY


ROADSHOW FILMS



VLAD THE CONQUERER

2015 WAS THE YEAR RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADMIR PUTIN STAMPED HIS AUTHORITY ON WORLD EVENTS. 2016 LOOKS NO DIFFERENT

While tens of thousands of German citizens were tearing down the Berlin wall, a KGB officer stationed in Dresden was in a state of panic. The Officer, whose job was to gather intelligence on local students and recruit anyone willing to spy for the Soviet Government back home, had spent the last few days burning and shredding documents while the citizens of Dresden threatened to storm his offices. A series of frantic telegrams to his superiors had been left unanswered.

"Moscow is silent", the 37-year-old spook declared.

Fast forward to 2016 and that man is now one of the most powerful – and, if Western politicians and media are to be believed, dangerous – men in the world. Vladimir Putin, the man at the top of the pile of Oligarchs currently in charge of Russia, has an unshakeable grip on the country whose pride was so utterly wounded when the Soviet Union collapsed. He's made it his mission in life to restore the sense of national power that Russians seem to hold so dearly.

He is also, without a doubt, the man who will hold the largest sway on world events in 2016.

While Obama, NATO and the UN stab blindly in the dark, not knowing quite what to do about ISIS and the Syrian Civil War, Putin knows exactly what he wants, and how he's going to get it.

It's a predictable pattern, all with the aim of reclaiming that lost Russian pride – which goes a long way to explaining Putin's actions. The man is a patriot. He's old school. We're talking 1950s, Russian-era-of-world-dominance-old-school.

It's been the guiding philosophy behind his invasion of neighbouring territories (see: Ukraine, Crimea, Chechnya) and his complete and utter dominance of Russian national discourse. He's clamped down on the kind of progressive freedoms enjoyed in the west, especially feminist and gay-rights movements, in an effort to establish a more "traditional" Russian nation. Russian religious conservatism, for so long repressed under the old Soviet regime, has been recruited as the spiritual arm of Putin's takeover of Russian society.

In the wake of the recent terrorist attacks in France and the bombing of a Russian airliner, Putin saved some particularly strong words for Islamic immigrants.

THERE'S NO DOUBT PUTIN ENJOYS PROVOKING THE WEST. GIVING ASYLUM TO EDWARD SNOWDEN WAS A MASSIVE MIDDLE FINGER

His intervention in Syria is telling. While the US and its NATO allies have been wavering about, unsure of what to do in the face of the ISIS juggernaut, Putin has taken decisive action, damned be the consequences.

Of course, humanitarian issues are none of Putin's concern. He's there to help his friend and ally in the region, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who made a formal request for Russian assistance in its effort to defeat ISIS and stamp out other, more democratic, opposition.

The protests from the West were immediate.

"We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its attacks on the Syrian opposition and civilians," said US President Barack Obama in the aftermath of Putin's strikes on anti-government forces in Syria.

Putin's action in the region is obviously born purely out of Russian self-interest: he wants all that sweet, sweet oil, and he's made the shrewd calculation that the downright evil Syrian dictator is the man who can deliver it.

But in making such an obvious and decisive power-play, Putin is outlining the absolute mess that is Western policy in the region.

"In Russia, lives Russians," the prez said.

"Any minority from anywhere at all, if it wants to live in Russia, to work and eat in Russia, should speak Russian. If they want Sharia law, then we advise them to go to those places where that's the state law. Russia does not need minorities, minorities need Russia, and we will not grant them special privilege, or try to change our laws to fit their desires, no matter how loud they yell "Discrimination."

There's no doubt that Putin enjoys provoking the west, too. Giving Edward Snowden – public enemy number one of the US Government – asylum was a huge middle finger to the Obama administration. And he's used the fact that Russia controls the vast majority of the oil flowing to Europe as a trump card when it comes to international relations.

With talk of declining US power, the rise of China, the scourge of Islamic Fundamentalism and the average Western citizen's preoccupation with the Kardashians, it's often too easy to forget that the man who governs a nation with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world wants one thing more than any other: complete and utter power. 

SUMMER FILM FLASHBACK

A FILMMAKER'S APOCALYPSE

Summer holidays are a time to sit back, relax, and watch some all-time classic films. And there is no greater summer classic than Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 blockbuster, *Apocalypse Now*, a film that shows Hollywood at both its most absurdly bombastic and its most thoughtful.

It's all there in the opening scene: we hear the sound of helicopters in the distance while a serene shot of the jungle fills the screen. The Doors' *This Is The End* plays throughout. Coppola's camera stays on the scene for what seems like an eternity, then... BOOM! An entire section of jungle gets blown up for our entertainment. Or to make a point about the horror of warfare. Or something. Thing is, this ain't no CGI trickery. Nope, Coppola actually blew up a large area of jungle in the Philippines for the opening scene.

Which encapsulates what is so great about *Apocalypse Now*... Or perhaps it says something about the hubris of the American Empire. When your filmmakers can blow up whole sections of another country purely for entertainment, you've got an empire there, pal.

Made in the Philippines, primarily because of the access to cheap labour, *Apocalypse Now* plays out

like a really, really bad acid trip as a group of soldiers led by Martin Sheen's Captain Willard travel up a river toward Cambodia on a mission to assassinate an American Field Officer, Colonel Kurtz (played by a morbidly obese, completely unprepared but utterly brilliant Marlon Brando), who has gone insane and carved out his own little empire in the jungle.

Or perhaps he hasn't gone insane. There's an argument to be made that the USA fights its wars with one hand tied behind its back – if it really wanted to win in Vietnam, or Iraq or Afghanistan for that matter, it could have done so easily with overwhelming force. Kurtz has, essentially, taken American imperialism to its logical conclusion: if you're going to fight a war, why not use everything at your disposal to win it?

Along the way Willard and his crew (check out a very young Lawrence Fishburn) encounter no end of strangeness. Robert Duvall steals the show as Lieutenant-Colonel Kilgore, a gung-ho tough guy who is obsessed with surfing. He orders a massive airstrike on a Vietnamese village so he can ride some decent waves on a break nearby. He's also responsible for one of the



BONUS FEATURE: The filming of *Apocalypse Now* was such an unmitigated disaster, went so far over budget and drove so many people on set totally insane that its making is the subject of a feature length documentary named, quite appropriately, *Hearts Of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*.

best speeches in cinema history: "Can you smell that? Napalm, son. Nothing else in the world smells like that. I love the smell of napalm in the morning."

Apocalypse Now is one of those films you just have to see: It's too long. The plot doesn't really make any sense. It was, at the time, the most expensive film ever made.

But it had something to say – can you imagine Hollywood execs greenlighting such an expensive film these days that wasn't a blockbuster featuring robots destroying planet Earth?

It's a moment in American filmmaking that will probably never come again – when hubris, ambition, money and a desire to do something important all came together to create a complete and utter mess of a masterpiece. 

THE STRANGEST ALBUM EVER MADE TURNS TWENTY

Twenty years ago, Michael Jackson released *HIStory*. Anybody that remembers the four-minute promotional video will remember just what an event this was. This was the era of Whacko Jacko.

HIStory was released when Jackson had settled with the Chandler family after a prolonged investigation into child abuse. The allegations had been hugely publicized, and the album is a bizarre item to revisit, not only because we now know the full Jackson story in all its decadent, lurid tragedy, but because it surely must be one of the most self-indulgent cultural artefacts in recent history. Moving beyond the egomaniacal title, the cover (of course) features a statue of Jackson, glowing silver against a fiery sky.

The promotional video, featuring parading soldiers, intercut with shirtless blacksmiths working on Jackson's statue and pulling chains randomly, was shot in Budapest, and features a bunch of quasi-fascist imagery that we associate with power, strength and the industrial military complex. Jackson marches out ahead, resplendent in a black uniform, and the parade turns into frenzied party. Young girls holding 'King of Pop' signs throw streamers and shriek, fainting at the sign of their musical demigod.

The soldiers engage, on Jackson's vaguely-militaristic hand signal, in some elaborately choreographed stomping and gun twirling, before the video goes into fanciful 90s-Michael-Bay fantasy land. Choppers descend, cars are lit on fire, riots break out, things explode. A little boy screams MICHAEL I LOVE YOOOOOU.

Michael loves you too, little boy.

Is the video aligning MJ with Jesus or Hitler? It's a confusing narrative, with some very confusing imagery, which no doubt passed through the Michael Jackson filter with feedback like 'more soldiers, please'. A helicopter swoops under Jackson's giant silver crutch. It's all very silly.

And then there's the music. Disc one



THE PACKAGING FEATURES A PHOTO OF ELIZABETH TAYLOR AND RICHARD BURTON IN THE FILM CLEOPATRA, WITH JACKSON'S HEAD PHOTOSHOPPED OVER BURTON'S. IT'S INSANE



makes sense in terms of being a pretty striking best-of. Everybody is familiar with the pop grooves of Billie Jean and Bad, but the Jackson filter falters with the inclusion of clunkers like *She's Out of My Life* and *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*.

And the self-delusion doesn't end there. Disc two is comprised of new material, which is a very mixed bag. It doesn't help that the last third of the disc is slathered with phoned-in, straight-to-video quality orchestral accompaniment.

To top it off there is the tune *Childhood* (Theme From *Free Willy 2*) which is no doubt included with absolutely no sense of irony on Jackson's part.

If you have ever dared read through the booklet included with the album, you'll have to slog through declarations of Jackson's genius by luminaries like Elizabeth Taylor, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Steven Spielberg. The booklet is also decked out with whacko Jacko's own dedications to Diana Ross, Quincy Jones, Lisa Marie Presley, Thomas Edison the Notorious B.I.G. and Paul McCartney, among others. It's freaking bizarre. My personal favourite addition to this booklet, toward the back, is a sepia toned image of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton from *Cleopatra*. But with Jackson's head photoshopped over Burton's. Absolutely insane. 



WEB

VICTORIAN TAXIS LAUNCH DISASTROUS TWITTER CAMPAIGN

Whoever is in charge of the Victorian Taxi Association's marketing must be in a whole world of trouble, after a hashtag campaign called Your Taxis backfired spectacularly.

The organisation launched the hashtag as an obvious attempt to connect with all those young people on twitter, encouraging folks to share their "taxi story" on the social network using the hashtag #yourtaxis. Things went downhill almost immediately, with users flocking to tell their stories of half-assed cab drivers getting lost and leaving their passengers on the sidewalk, bags in hands.

"Cab rear ended another car, kept meter running while exchanging details for 20mins, demanded I pay total amount, I hurt my neck," wrote one person. And that was one of the less disturbing stories. Others recounted tales of Taxi drivers asking for sexual favours:

"I got into a cab and the driver drove for 10 mins, pulled into an alleyway and asked if I was a 'party girl'" wrote another woman.

"Dragged close mate down the street with his watch caught in the door, could have killed him," another said.

At first, the complete morons handling the Taxi Association's Twitter account attempted to do some damage control by responding to each story, but the avalanche proved too much, and eventually they seemed to just give up.

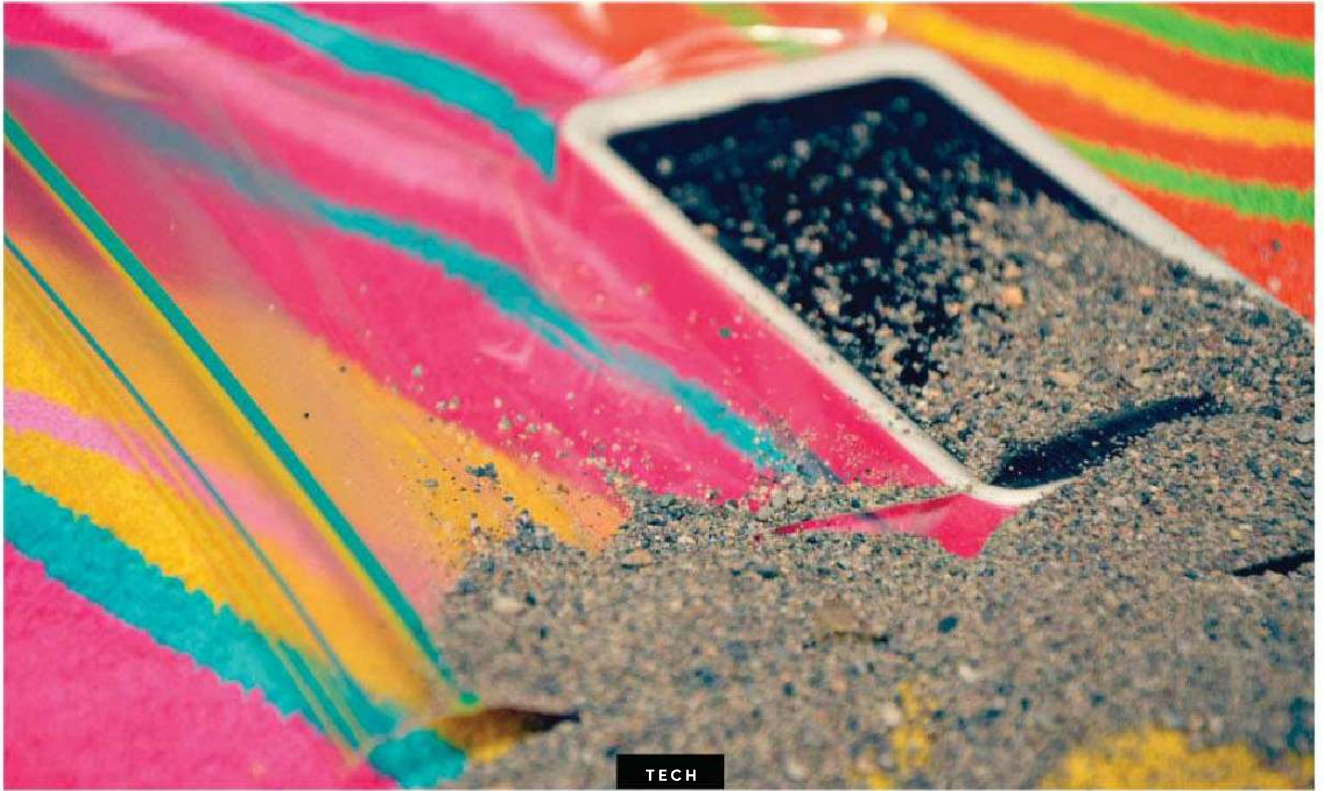
In a press release, Taxi Association CEO David Samuel made the case that the campaign was not, in fact, an abject failure.

"This was never about selling something, this is about starting a conversation with everyone who uses Victorian taxis and giving them an opportunity to tell us what they think. This is what we have achieved."

This isn't the first time a large organisation has had an online Twitter campaign bite them in the arse, and frankly, it won't be the last. Social media managers seem unable to see how unwise it is to allow the masses direct commentary on their products.

McDonalds is a case in point. In 2013, the company's hashtag campaign was epically hijacked. Encouraging users to share positive tales about their restaurants under the hashtag #McDstories, the campaign went absolutely haywire.

"One time I walked into McDonalds and I could smell type 2 diabetes floating in the air. I threw up," wrote one user. Others saw the funny side: "Paid for my food but almost left cause I was high and convinced the workers called the cops and were using my food as bait," was perhaps the best line of the whole campaign. ☹️



THROW AWAY YOUR PHONE THIS SUMMER

I woke up this morning at five am and immediately reached over for my smartphone, a device I carry with me at all times. In fact, if I don't have my phone on me, a sense of panic begins to set in. *Oh my god. What if somebody calls me or texts me or emails me or sends me a Facebook message or a Snapchat or a tweet?*

It's called Nomophobia – the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. And yes, this is a thing. The term has managed to find its way into the Oxford English Dictionary and Wikipedia – the two modern signifiers that a word or description is legit.

A whole bunch of studies have been conducted into Nomophobia. Recently, Australian researchers conducted a study of 946 people between the ages of 15 and 24. To cut a long story short, the study found that over 62% of respondents

reported what could be described as addiction to their phones, including a sense of anxiety and panic when out of reach. It's a condition that, if you take a look at all those ashen-faces staring down at their small screens on your daily train-ride to work, seems to have a firm grip on almost everyone.

Smartphones are also preventing you from sleeping properly. It's something I've experienced myself. About six months ago I went through a really annoying phase of waking up at 3am and being unable to get back to sleep. I could feel my phone there, waiting, calling me, letting me know that it's bright screen was ready to fill that sleepless void.

Almost every time, it won out, and I'd end up on a YouTube spree that lasted until sunrise.

And then there's work. The rise of the smartphone has made it impossible to disengage from our

5 THINGS YOU COULD DO THIS SUMMER INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT YOUR PHONE:

1. Try to pick up a girl on the street.
2. Launch a campaign for the US Presidency.
- Hey, Trump's leading the charge right now, you're in with a chance.
3. Join ISIS
4. Convince your dying grandmother to give you that inheritance money early.
5. Start your own religion.

jobs. A study conducted at the university of Rotterdam found “the increased productivity associated with staying connected to work in the evening hours is often achieved at the cost of mental health, yielding higher stress levels, impaired performance, fatigue and sleep complaints.”

Perhaps the worst symptom of smartphone addiction is an inability to just look beyond the screen and think about life. What the modern smartphone does is take away our ability to just sit back and not do anything. To unwind.

That's what being a human is all about, but we're all addicted to doing little, meaningless things with our phones that fill these tiny gaps in which we should really be just contemplating things. So this summer, throw away your phone for a few days, go and meet some people, and live a little. ☺

FALLOUT 4 HAS THE RADIOACTIVE CHARM OF THE NUCLEAR WASTE IT'S NAMED AFTER

The post-apocalyptic Fallout franchise is one of the most beloved series in history. When Bethesda Softworks, creators of fantasy RPG's *Morrowind* and *Oblivion*, took over production and produced *Fallout 3*, reception was mixed. The game was fun, but it fell short of the charm of the originals.

Members of the original Black Isle team were brought in to make its follow-up, *Fallout: New Vegas*, a highly praised title that captured the true spirit of the originals.

So hopes were higher than ever when Bethesda announced, earlier this year, that *Fallout 4* would be released in November.

Those hopes have not been met.

Glitches and operating faults are part and parcel of Bethesda's game; they're to be expected in open world productions as large as *Skyrim* and *Fallout 3*, but *Fallout 4* feels like a game that is still in the beta stages of production.

I'm certainly what you'd call an experienced Wastelander. From the vaults of *Fallout 1*, *2* and *3*... to the Mojave Desert of *Fallout: New Vegas* and the isometric apocalypse of *Wasteland 2* – I've even seen Mel Gibson and Bane in those movies where stuff happens in the outback.

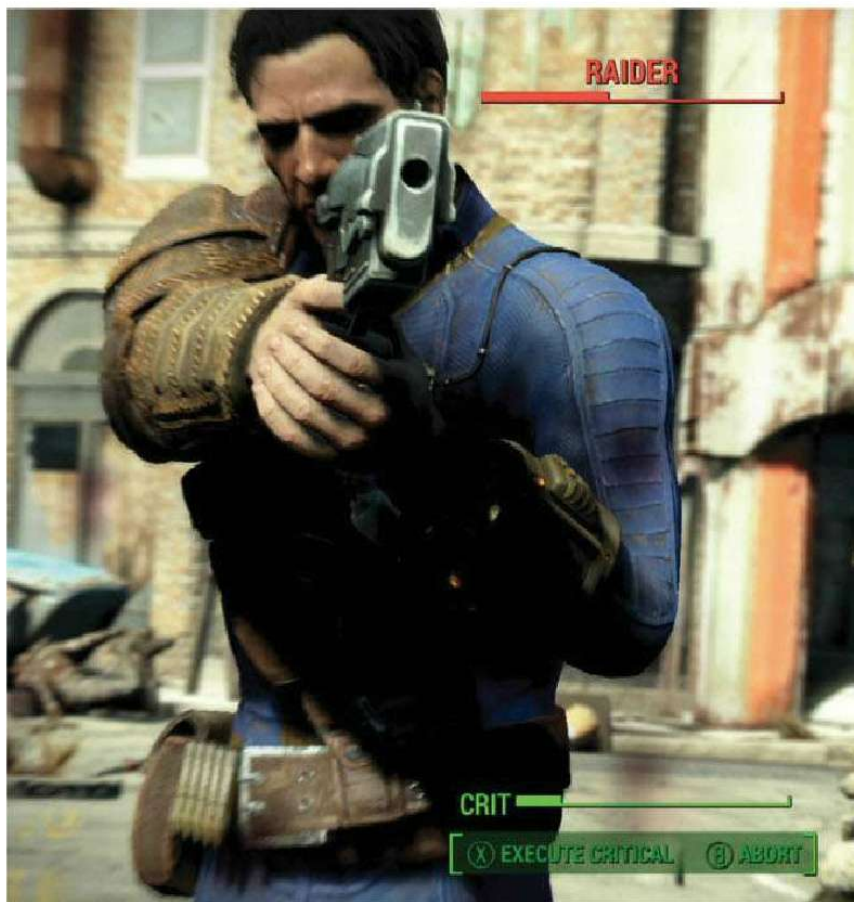
Maybe my hopes were too high. But *Fallout 4* is trash from the get-go.

Previous games in the series thrust players into a nuked, retro-sci fi American wasteland and made them do the best with what they had. They were hard.

Within the first hour of *Fallout 4*, players are given the most powerful armour in the game, the mechanised Power-Armour, and become all but invincible.

Moments later you get the most overpowered weapon available: a rocket launcher that lobbs mini-nukes at your enemies.

The biggest insult comes when players are introduced to a Farmville style town-



THE ONLY HUMOUR PRESENT IN THIS INSTALMENT IS UNINTENTIONAL, LIKE SHOOTING A RAIDER AND WATCHING HIS BODY GLITCH HUNDREDS OF MILES INTO THE POORLY TEXTURED AIR



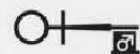
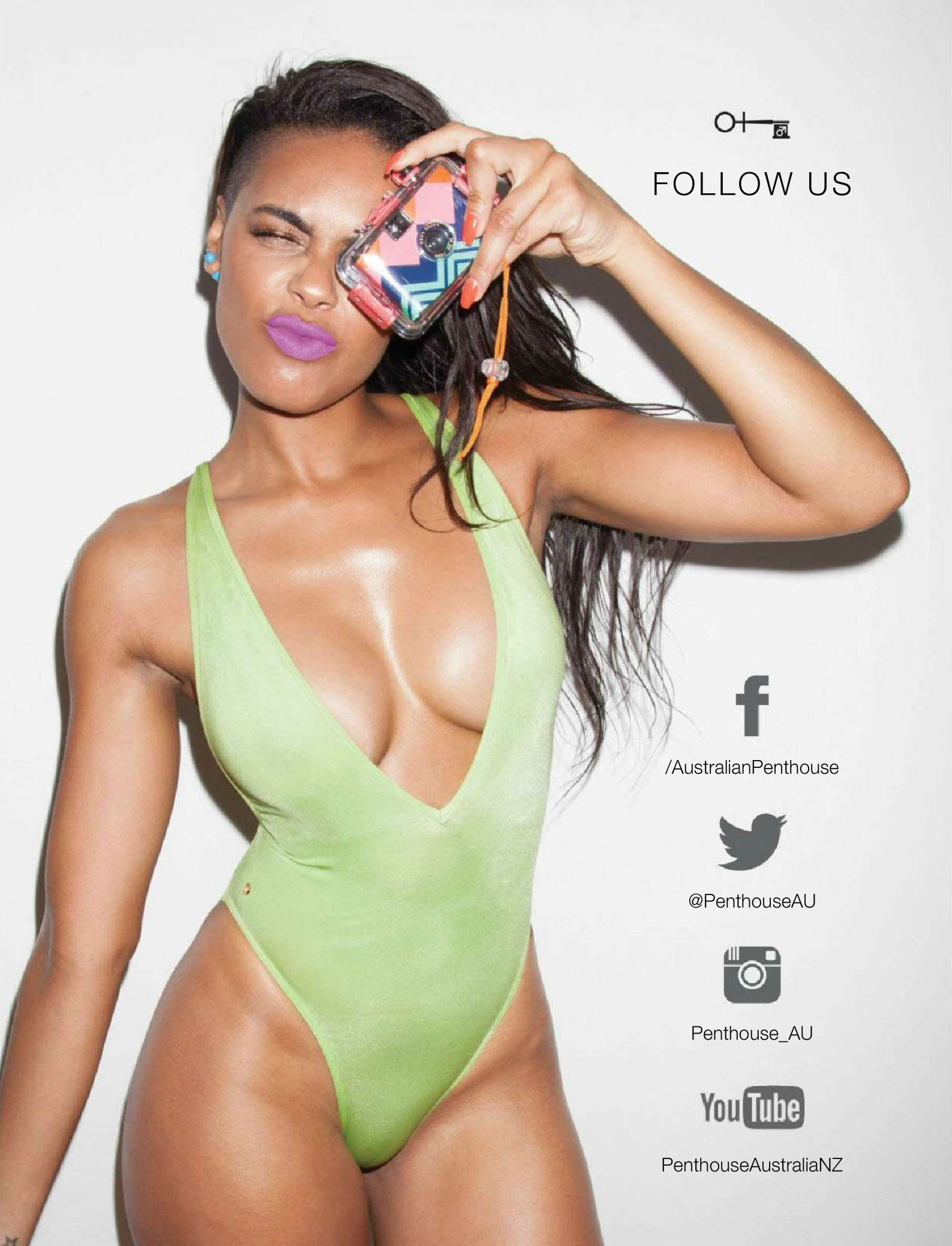
simulator where you can "grow crops", and "build houses and beds!"

The dialogue system is now so far removed from the immersive nature that Bethesda has been known for, and the voice acting is cringe-worthy. The role-playing mechanics of the game are all but gone – this is now a first-person shooter in sheep's clothing that feels like it's trying, and failing, to cash in on the charm of the *Borderlands* games. Also missing is the series' famous sense of humour. In previous games, giving your character an intelligence rating of only 1 or 2 would see your dialogue options throughout the entire story limited to grunts and phrases like "me hit stuff good, mr science lady."

The only humour present in this instalment is unintentional, like shooting a raider and watching his body glitch hundreds of miles into the poorly textured air.

Gone are the nuances of *Fallout*'s Reputation and Karma system, so you can literally murder every member of an entire faction and face no consequences from anyone else in the world.

This sequel has all the charm of the radioactive waste that its named after. For a truly immersive experience, try going to back to the recently-released Kickstarter game *Wasteland 2*. 



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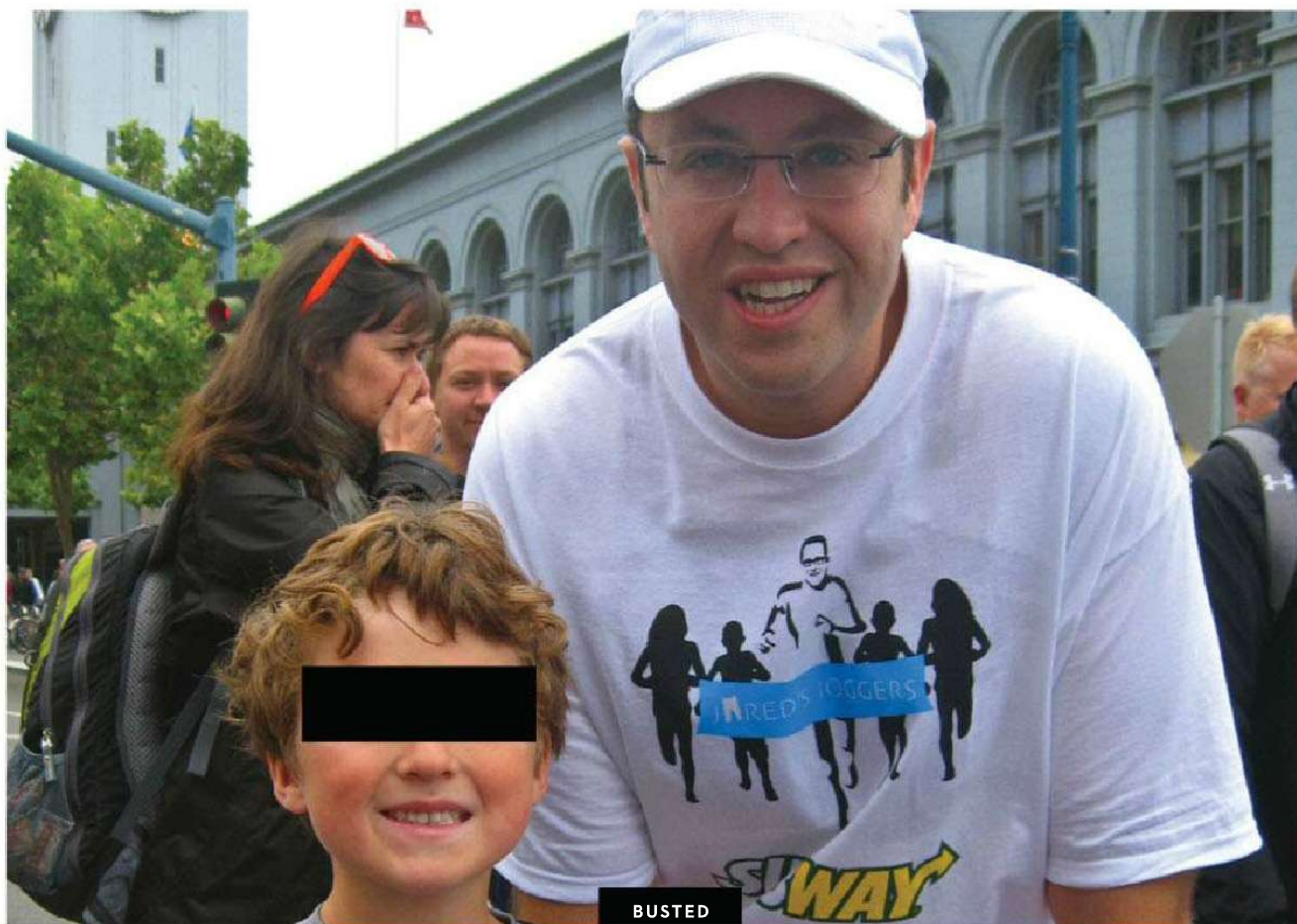
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SUBWAY GUY CONFESSES TO CHILD PORN CHARGES

Jared Fogle, the man who somehow managed to convince the world that eating a footlong sub with extra cheese and meatballs was somehow a healthy alternative, has pleaded guilty to charges of receiving child pornography and been sentenced to serve 15 years in jail.

Fogle first came to public attention as the face of Subway in an enormous marketing campaign touting the brand's potential to help those suffering from obesity. Fogle had gotten the gig after a former friend wrote about his weight loss in an article for *Men's Health* titled "Stupid Diets That Work."

According to the article, Fogle had become obese through lack of exercise and eating junk food, but changed his eating habits upon the switch to eating at Subway by making healthier choices

with smaller portions that were free of high calorie condiments such as mayonnaise. While following this diet, he lost a significant amount of weight. A Chicago-area Subway franchisee took Fogle's story to Subway's advertising agency, and before long, he was convincing people world-wide that Subway was actually good for you (it's really, really not).

On July 7, 2015, the FBI and Indiana State Police investigators conducted a search at Fogle's Zionsville, Indiana, residence; computers and other electronic equipment were removed from the home.

Prosecutors alleged that Fogle offered adult prostitutes a fee to find him younger sex partners, and that he was found in possession of photos and videos of children as young as six.

On November 19, Fogle formally pleaded guilty before federal judge Tanya Walton

Pratt. In a statement, he apologized for his crimes, saying that he wanted a chance to become a "good, honest person" and "redeem my life" after being ensnared in a web of "deception, lies and complete self-centeredness."

According to a forensic psychiatrist who testified for Fogle's defense team, he suffered from compulsive eating disorders for several years before losing weight, and replaced food with a sense of "hypersexuality."

Pratt sentenced him to 15 years in prison – more than three years greater than the sentence prosecutors had sought, and three times what Fogle had asked for. "The level of perversion and lawlessness exhibited by Mr. Fogle is extreme," Pratt said. Fogle must serve a minimum of 13 years before becoming eligible for time off with good behavior. 

BUSTED

A LOOK BACK AT ALL THOSE WHO WERE BUSTED IN 2015

1. FIFA: THE COSA NOSTRA OF SPORTS

With so much money tied up in professional sports, it's inevitable that some of it will change hands under the table.

However, it's hard to keep it under the table when it's out in the open, as at soccer's FIFA, where 14 officials were indicted for wire fraud, racketeering, and money laundering.

You know things have gotten really bad when the legal problems of a sport become more interesting than the sport itself.

2. NESTLE: SLAVE-LABOUR GOODNESS

Few brands say "chocolatey goodness" better than Nestle, even though the company now makes a wide range of products, including Fancy Feast cat food.

Unfortunately, some of the fish used to create Fancy Feast apparently came from slave ships where kidnapped workers were chained and beaten.

The jarring contrast between slave laborers and pampered pets isn't exactly what one expects from a brand whose tag line is "Good Food, Good Life."

3. TURING PHARMACEUTICALS: THE WORST IN BIG PHARMA

There are few issues in the U.S. that get people so heated up as the high cost of health care and exactly what to do about it.

The public outrage was thus predictable when Turing's CEO, Martin Shkreli, raised the price of a \$1-to-manufacture life-saving drug from \$13.50 to \$750 a pill.

Hilariously, Shkreli thought he could manager-splain his reasoning before public opinion forced him (and the price) back down.

4. VW: WHO KNEW A COMPANY FOUNDED BY HITLER WAS EVIL?

It seemed too good to be true: a car that ran on cheap diesel fuel but didn't pollute the environment.



However, VW's "clean diesel" was the result of on-board software that could tell when a car was being tested... and adjust the pollution levels downward accordingly.

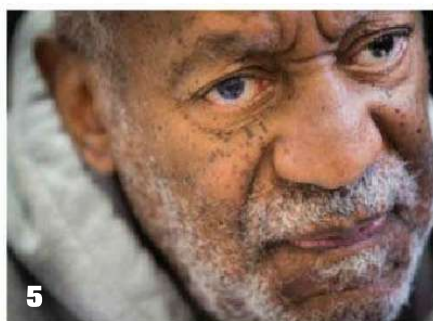
The result has been a massive recall, lawsuits, calls for an FTC investigation and permanent damage to a brand once known for its reliability.

5. BILL COSBY: WOW. WHAT A BASTARD

For decades, Bill Cosby was a role model for millions as an actor, producer, spokesperson, entrepreneur, comedian, and pundit.

His personal brand was among the most valuable in Hollywood, landing him a spot in the Advertising Hall of Fame.

However, the Cosby empire tumbled like a house of cards when dozens of women came forward accusing him of drugging and molesting them. 





THE WAR ON LANGUAGE

'RAPE CULTURE' GET BANDIED ABOUT A LOT, BUT IT'S PART OF A WAR ON LANGUAGE THAT DOES DAMAGE TO REAL VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. THE FACT IS THAT LANGUAGE, ESPECIALLY AROUND TOPICS LIKE THIS, MATTERS, WRITES ROB SCOTT

A girlfriend of mine, Isabella, is relating a story about sexual hazing performed by young men in the first year of a university she attended. "It was a competition. Two points for pulling a girl's top down. Ten if you lifted it up and somebody else pulled down her underpants." She goes on to tell me about another competition in which a prize – a Sony Discman – was awarded to the first guy to sleep with a girl on campus. My friend happened to be that girl. She didn't get a Sony Discman. Her "prize" came in the form a slogan – the word "slut" – painted across her college door.

Her stories are a perfect example of what is termed "rape culture", the theory (and, burn me at the stake for blasphemy, it is a theory, with facts and statistics that can both confirm and deny its existence) that the cultural practises our society commonly engages in either excuse or otherwise encourage sexual violence.

If you're confused about what allegedly constitutes rape culture, give Google a shot. You'll come up with a variety of answers, including some clearly sexist university chants, the director of an American Christian ministry declaring that teenage girls and

Have My Money, in which a woman is kidnapped and sexually humiliated because her partner owes Rihanna some cash.

There are certainly numerous examples of horrific sexual assaults. But does that mean there is a widespread acceptance of rape in Western societies that justifies the use of the term "rape culture"? The US organisation RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), which dedicates itself to preventing rape and sexual assault, recently recommended that law enforcement remain focused on "the true cause of the problem".

"In the last few years, there has been an unfortunate trend towards blaming "rape culture" for the extensive problem of sexual violence," wrote RAINN's president, Scott Berkowitz, in a letter to the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. "While it is helpful to point out the systemic barriers to addressing the problem, it is important to not lose sight of a simple fact: Rape is caused not by cultural factors but by the conscious decisions, of a small percentage of the community, to commit a violent crime."

And that's the issue. Rape is horrific, violent, does huge damage

USING BLANKET TERMS LIKE 'RAPE CULTURE' IS INTELLECTUAL LAZINESS IN THE FACE OF SOMETHING THAT NEEDS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION

their hot selfies are leading her boys astray, the "ubiquity of street harassment" and, of course, Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams' song Blurred Lines. What bothers me about the term is that it reduces something incredibly complex, covering a whole range of practises, both long-standing and relatively recent, and reduces it down to a slogan, labelling anyone who does not subscribe to this particular set of beliefs as part of the problem.

Blurred Lines is a perfect example. It's an annoying song, sure. The lyrics are most certainly sexist. But do they promote non-consensual sex? No, they do not. It's difficult to say exactly what Williams and Thicke are on about, and they're certainly not on the level of, say, John Lennon's Run For Your Life.

"I'd rather see you dead, little girl, than to be with another man." Lennon sings. Imagine the outrage if the song was released today.

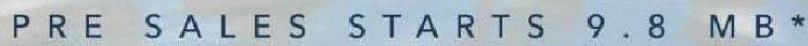
There are untold numbers of songs, poems, works of art, films and plays that reflect on the complexities and ambiguities of sex. Some aren't so complex – in Rude Boy, Rihanna sings about submission, and the song clearly displays an interest in the blurred lines of consent. Then you've got her clip for Bitch Better

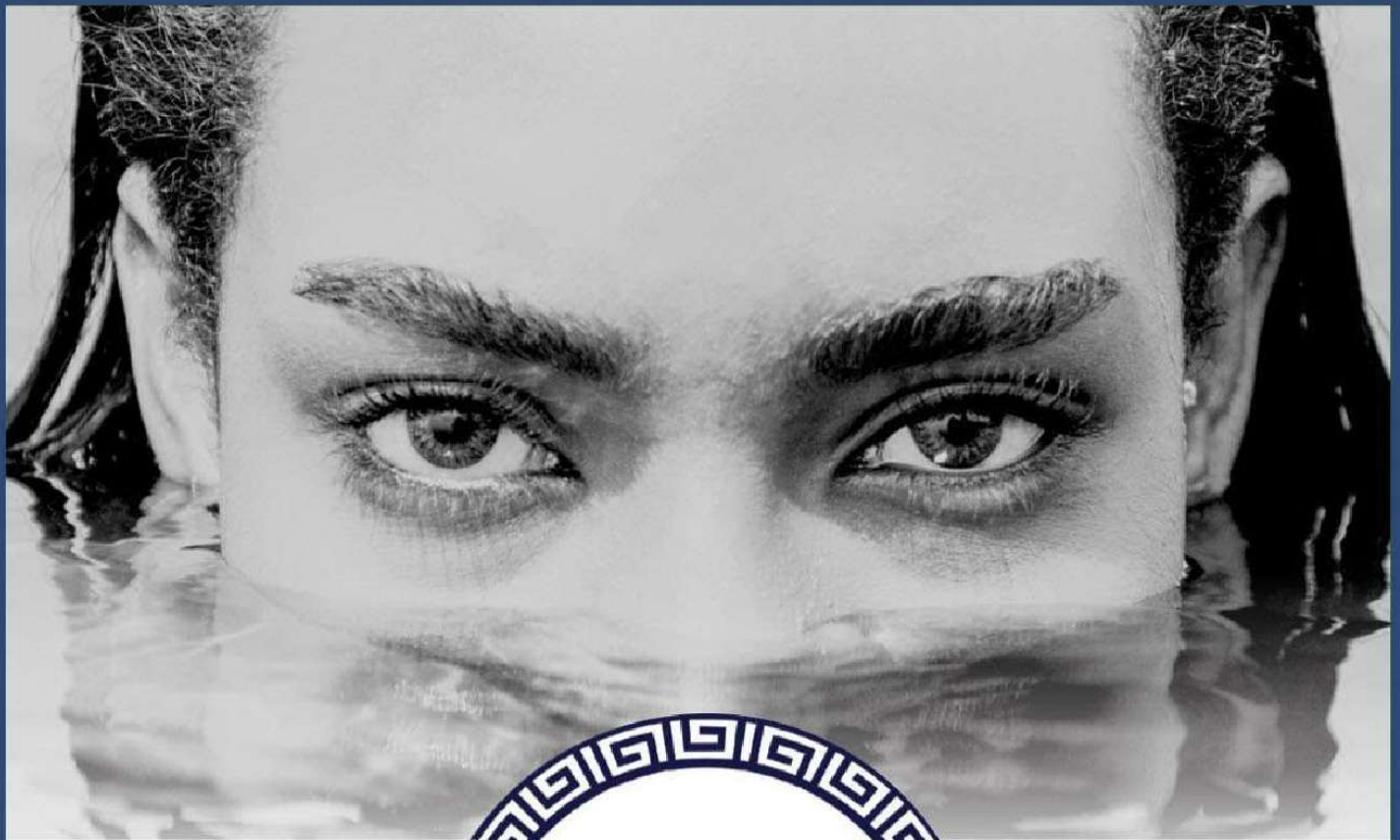
to its victims... and has a specific definition. To define everything from outdated social attitudes or ways of speaking, to unwanted come-ons, to drunken sex, to non-consensual, penetrative rape under the umbrella term of "rape culture" is like saying that verbally assaulting someone, stealing their wallet, beating the hell out them or cutting their throat and watching them bleed to death are all part of "murder culture," and should all be approached in much the same way.

The fact that these transgressions are distinct from one another doesn't stop us from judging them as "bad" – but it does mean that we deal with each of them differently, with different sanctions, whether they be social or legal, with varying degrees of subtlety.

Language matters. Everything – especially when it comes to defining, and finding solutions for, something as serious as the entire spectrum of sexual interaction and discourse – needs to be given specific attention without resorting to sloganeering. What we need is to think about things more. Using blanket terms like 'rape culture' is intellectual and cultural laziness in the face of a problem that needs constant and serious consideration. 

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Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war... and ISIS

REFUGEES, ISLAMIC TERRORISM AND THE REAL DANGER

THE PARIS ATTACKS HAVE PROMPTED DEBATE AROUND ALLOWING SYRIAN REFUGEES FLEEING ISIS ENTRY INTO THE WEST. STATISTICS SHOW IT'S THE WRONG DISCUSSION.

In the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks and the bombing of a Russian Airliner by ISIS, the question on everybody's lips is whether Western nations like Australia should continue to allow those fleeing the conflict in Syria and Iraq refuge in our countries.

There have been numerous calls from politicians like Jackie Lambie to cease any intake of Syrian refugees, and once again, the Reclaim Australia movement has taken advantage of the attacks to call on the Australian government to send all those pesky, stateless people back home.

"No one's talked putting security, electronic bracelets on them, nobody's gone that far, I think it's about time we put our foot down here," the independent Senator said. "We'll be able monitor what is going on and where they're going."

Okay. Thanks for your input, Jackie. As always, you bring a sensible approach to complicated discussions that require intelligent thought.

The question of what to do about Syrian refugees is by a long way the wrong discussion to be having.

What really scares politicians, police and state officials is the home grown terrorist. The man who sneaks under the radar because he holds citizenship. The Paris attacks bring that possibility into stark relief.

The atrocities were carried out by men with European passports who were free to roam around the continent as they pleased.

The group's ringleader, a 28-year-old man with Belgian citizenship named Abdelhamid Abaaoud, was thought to have been in Syria at the time.

In fact, Abaaoud had been able to find his way through numerous European borders, completely unimpeded by the authorities.

Europe in particular has a problem with citizens who have become radicalised, and having a European passport allows one to travel freely among 26 countries.

There are no requirements for member states to disclose the names of those who have entered their borders to their fellow European nations.

What that means is that someone on the terror watch list in France, for example, might be able to make it into Germany without French authorities being alerted.

Abaaoud himself was seemingly on a tour of the continent before he masterminded the Paris attacks, and French authorities were only informed he was in their country – by an intelligence service *outside of Europe* – a stunning three days after he managed to coordinate out the slaughter of over 130 innocent people.

The fact is that the vast majority of terrorist attacks are carried out by citizens of the country that is attacked. And barely a fraction of them occur in Western nations.

Globally, terrorism is on the rise.

There were over 300 violent incidents

A mammoth refugee camp on the border of Jordan



caused by non-state actors in 2015, but – and this is important – over 80 percent of them occurred in five countries: Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria.

And the deadliest group wasn't even the Islamic State.

That dubious honour goes to Boko Haram, who operate in Nigeria – which was responsible for the most deaths caused by terrorist activity in 2015.

On January 3rd, Boko Haram swept through a number of villages on the border of Chad – completely unopposed – and left every village unlucky enough to come into contact with them desolate, smouldering and covered with bodies. Estimates put the toll at over 2000.

In April 2014, the group kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from their boarding house in Chibok and sold them into slavery.

The most horrific incident was perhaps the bombing of a marketplace that killed 20 people. It was carried out by a ten-year-old girl.

But most telling statistic is probably this: The yearly increase in the number of people killed in Nigeria is more than the number of people who were killed from terrorism around the world – combined – in 2005.

By comparison, the west has it easy. The statistics aren't fully updated for 2015 as yet, but between 2000–2014, deaths from terrorism in Western countries made up for a paltry 2.6 per cent of all terror-related fatalities.

If you take away the September 11 attacks, which killed 2,977 people, that number drops below 1 percent.

Another interesting statistic: Islamic Fundamentalism was the motivation for only 19 percent of terrorist activity in the West between 2006–2015. In America, the vast majority of extremist-related violence came from good-old-fashioned White Supremacists.

"Law enforcement agencies around the country have said the threat from Muslim extremists is not as great as the threat from right-wing extremists," says Charles Kurzman, a researcher at the University of North Carolina who published a study on home grown terrorism published by the American Centre on Terrorism and Homeland Security.

Over 74% of incidents in the USA were listed as being influenced by anti-government sentiments, rather than Islamic extremism.

Behind the 9/11 attacks, the most deadly terrorist bombing on American soil was carried out in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, when Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols killed 168 people and injured over 600 others. The duo were motivated by a mishmash of White-Supremacist ideologies and government conspiracy theories.

Of course, the most recent incident on Australian soil was Man Monis' Lindt

French crowds gather in solidarity against terrorist attacks.



Café siege, in which two people were killed. Yes, Monis was a refugee. Yes, he was an extremist who came here under the guise of seeking asylum.

But despite claiming to be influenced by ISIS and Al Qaeda, Monis was also, a paranoid schizophrenic – with over 40 counts of sexual assault to his name – who was under police investigation for the murder of his wife.

His attack was less Islamist-inspired and more the actions of one very, very disturbed man.

Of course, the fact that the French attacks – and the majority of other terrorist plots either foiled or carried out in 2015 – were conceived and carried out by home-grown Islamic Extremists hasn't prevented that nation's government from bombing the hell out of militants based in Syria.

On 15 November, the French Air Force launched the biggest airstrike of Opération

THE YEARLY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED IN NIGERIA IS MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WERE KILLED FROM TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD IN 2005

Chammal, its bombing campaign against ISIS, sending 10 aircraft to drop 20 bombs on Raqqa, the city where the group is based.

On 16 November, France carried out more airstrikes on targets in Raqqa, including a command centre and a training camp.

The French Army has also reported that while it normally receives between 100 to 150 applications per day, this number rose to 1500 in the week after the attack, higher than the rise to 400 after the Charlie Hebdo attack.

There was, however, a clear acknowledgement from the French authorities that blaming the influx of those fleeing Syria and Iraq for the terrorist attacks just doesn't make any sense: On November 18, Francois Hollande, the French President, reaffirmed his country's commitment to accepting 30,000 Syrian refugees over the next two years. 



TERRORISM AND PSEUDO-PROGRESSIVES

WANT SOMEBODY TO BLAME FOR CULTIVATING HOME GROWN JIHADIS? THE SEGREGATIONIST LEFT IS A GOOD PLACE TO START, ARGUES BRENDAN O'NEILL

Imagine if someone invited you to their home – for dinner, say – and then stuck you in the cellar. Imagine if the only other people they allowed into the cellar to break bread and sip booze with you were people who looked and sounded just like you: people of your race, religion, sex.

You'd think that was pretty rude, right? More than rude: a bit racist, segregationist. Surely the whole point of having people over is to facilitate mingling, a coming-together of folks whose paths would otherwise remain uncrossed.

Well, this screwed-up dinner-party scenario perfectly describes your average progressive's attitude to migrants.

Those of a leftist persuasion pose as the most welcoming, pro-migrant people. Yet they're also the most vocal cheerleaders of the divisive politics of identity, which preaches that the idea of shared national values is naff, if not a little fascistic, and we should just leave ethnic groups to their own devices.

They say to migrants, "Come in!", but it's a flimsy welcome: they then push them away. "Don't actually try to join our society, because it's rubbish and racist and won't treat you well." They call them to our home, then plonk them in the cellar.

This welcoming of migrants while telling them our societies are rotten and rude is not only cruel – it's dangerous. Following the barbarism in Paris, the problem of Western-born or Western-brought-up minorities who become furious with the West, so much so that they will blow themselves and us up, has been thrown into sharp relief.

From Paris to London, which was bombed by British-born Muslims, to Oz, the weird phenomenon of our own citizens declaring jihad on us has become globalised. Various explanations are offered up for this war on the West by people within the West. Some claim these young Muslims are furious about the West's recent wars. But I was opposed to those wars too. So would it make sense if I blew myself up in my local Starbucks? No? So why, then, is it treated as normal for a Muslim Brit or Aussie to kill in revenge for Iraq? Do Muslims lack the self-restraint enjoyed by whites like me? There's an ugly racial streak to the idea that Muslims feel "compelled" to kill because of stupid foreign policy.

Others claim these internal jihads are a product of our societies'

mistreatment of Muslims. The Grand Mufti of Australia said the "racism [and] Islamophobia" faced by French Muslims could have contributed to the Paris massacres.

This doesn't add up either. Why didn't earlier generations of the racially repressed – Stolen Aborigines, blacks in pre-civil rights America – also indulge in unhinged, murderous behaviour? Massacring your fellow citizens in a concert hall makes no sense as a response to feelings of exclusion.

No, in order to pursue jihad in your own nation, there's got to be a profound feeling of distance from, and disgust for, your own society. Where does that come from? I think much blame lies with the pseudo-progressives. Those who indulge in a PC form of segregationism. Those who constantly "celebrate all cultures",

which is actually nice-sounding code for eschewing universalism in favour of allowing each identity group to do and think their own thing, on their own, away from everyone else. In the cellar.

So when Hizb ut-Tahrir said it was wrong to make Muslim kids sing the Aussie anthem, some leftists agreed, claiming we must make concessions in the name of "cultural pluralism".

This all sounds lovely. But it has a really nasty edge. It promotes the idea that national values – the flag, the anthem, history – are horrible things. It says, "Stay on the outside, in your own cultural bubble". It cuts people off from other people, from society itself.

It gets worse. The PC lobby also cultivates a politics of victimhood within certain migrant groups. The Islamophobia industry, which constantly trawls for evidence of anti-Muslim sentiment, is forever telling Muslims that their own societies hate them.

What a lethal combination: preventing Muslims from fully integrating, and telling them their society is full of ugly bogan racists who want to rip off their veils or firebomb mosques.

The end result?

Alienation, fury, anti-Western feeling – all stirred up by identity-obsessed progressives who view integration as oppression. What a tragedy. Migrants who come to the West want to work, be secure, belong. But a vast new army of self-loathing purveyors of PC tell them: don't bother trying to fit in because the West ain't worth much.

And we wonder why some become so anti-West. 

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**ALIENATION, FURY AND
ANTI-WEST FEELINGS
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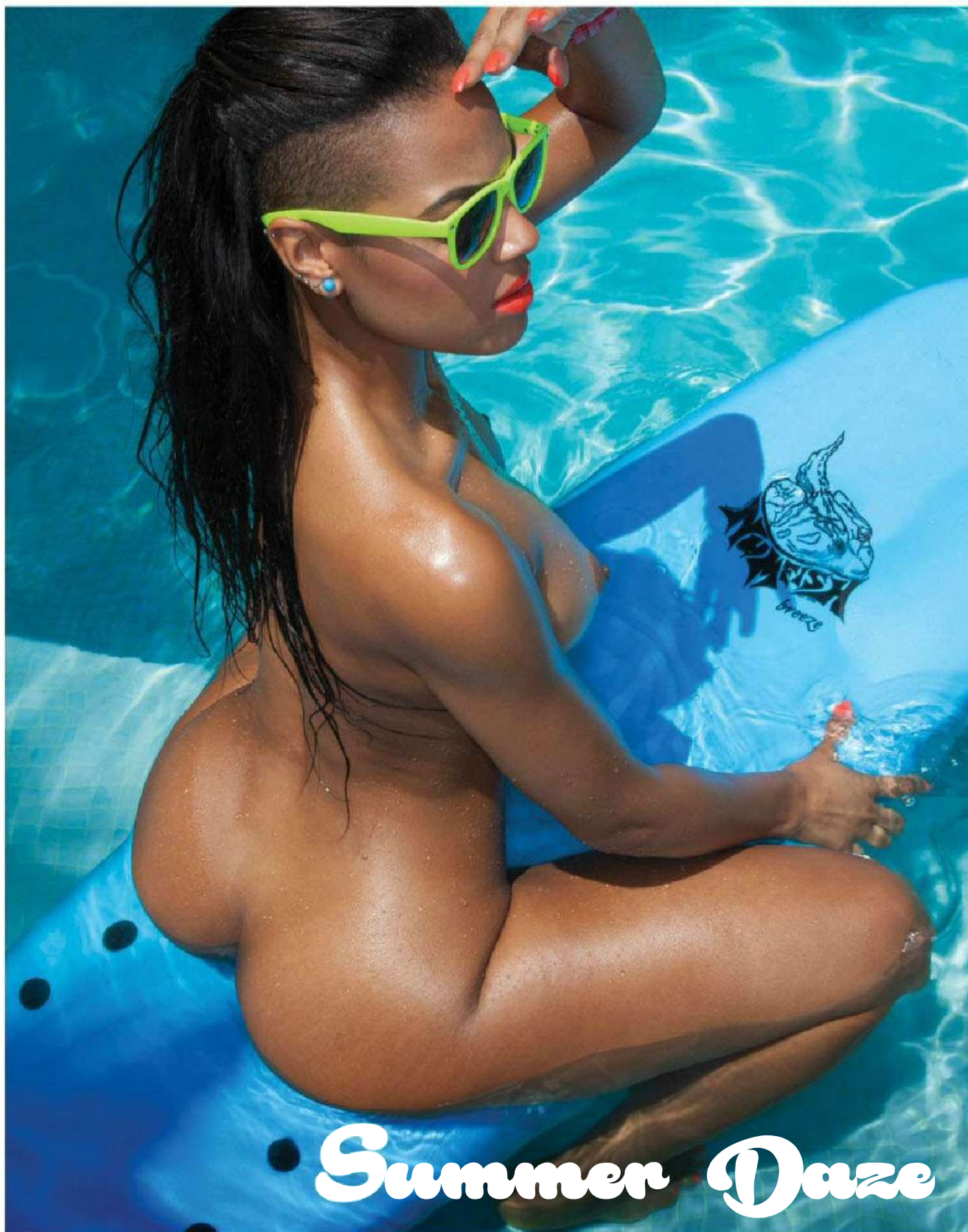


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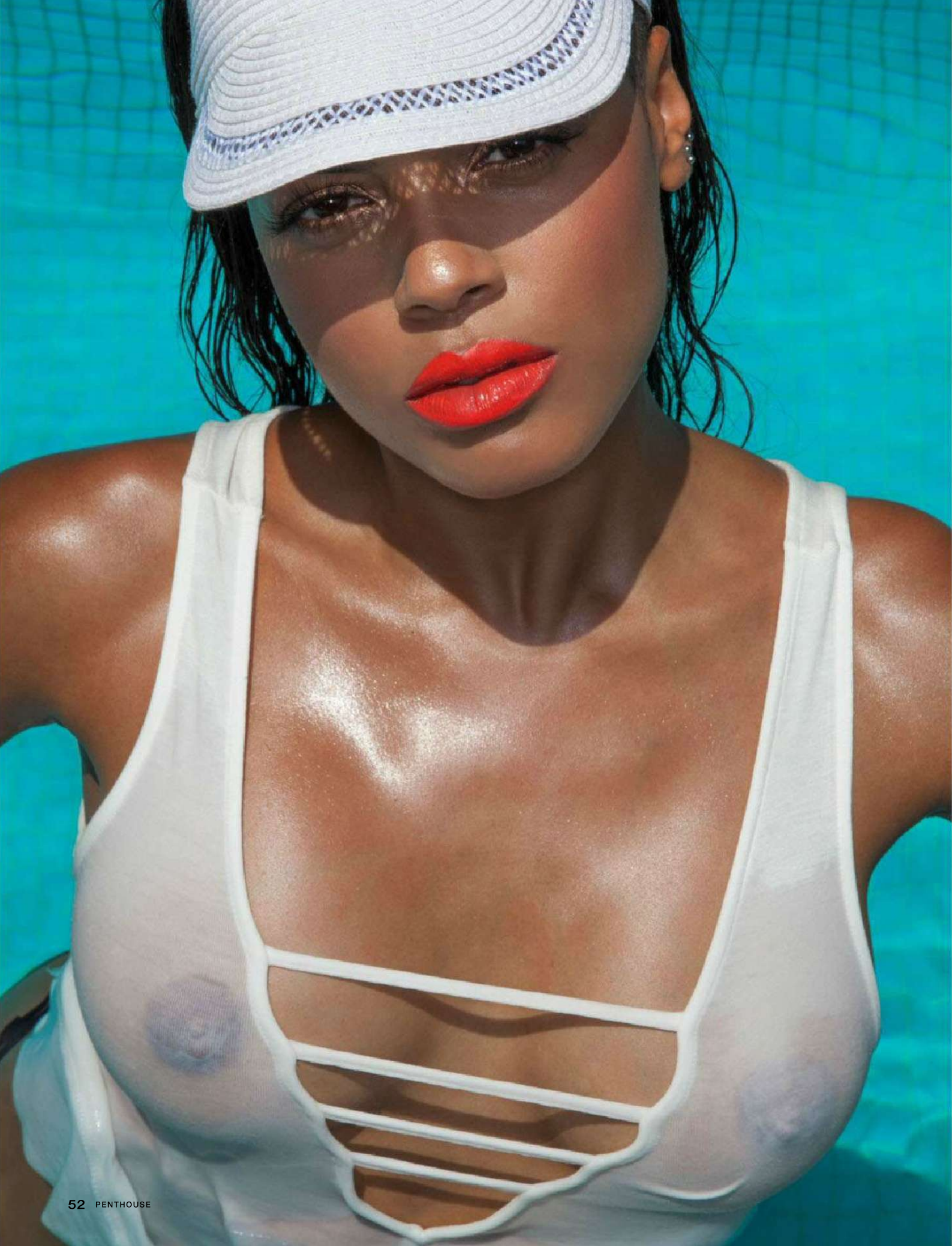
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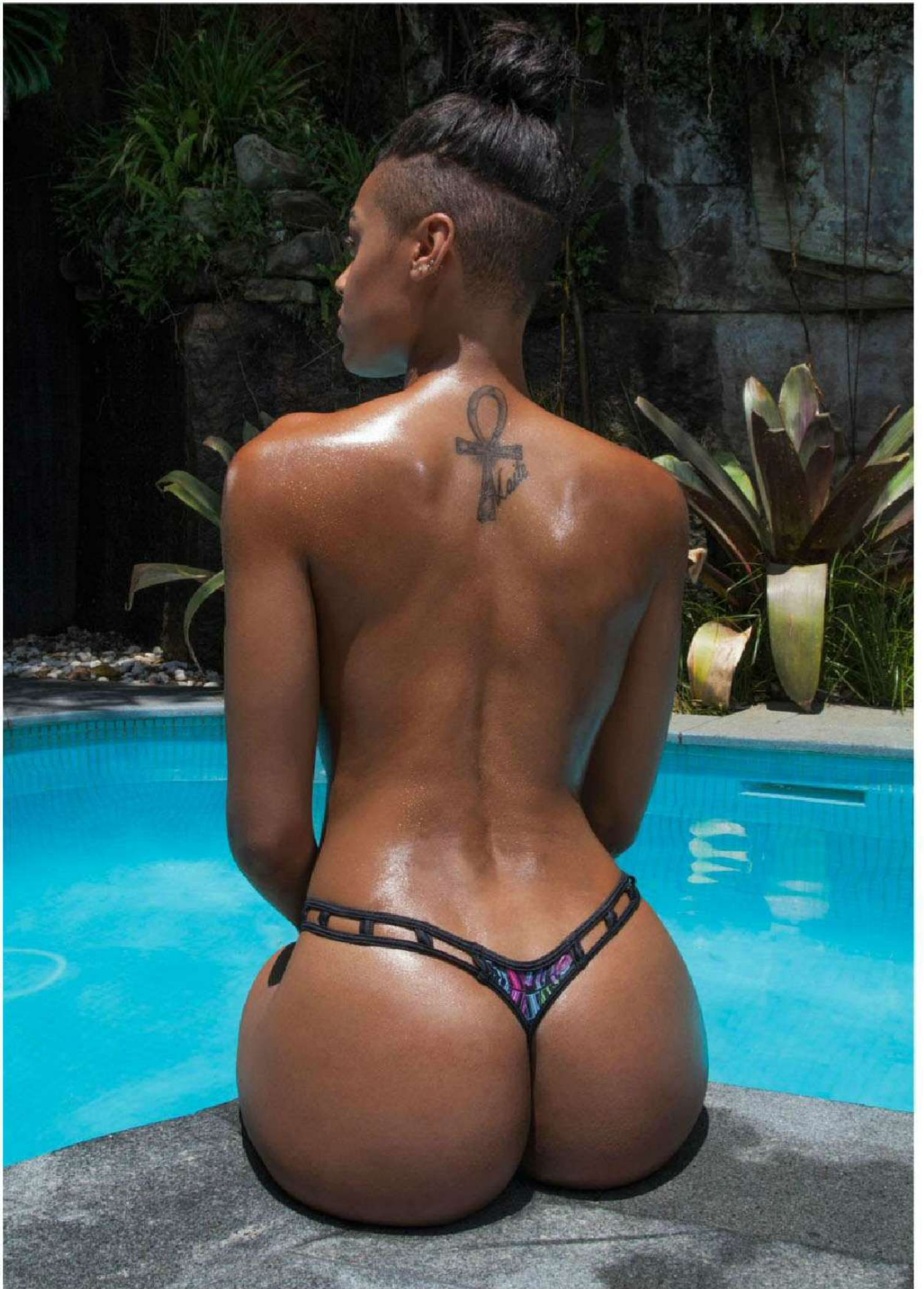


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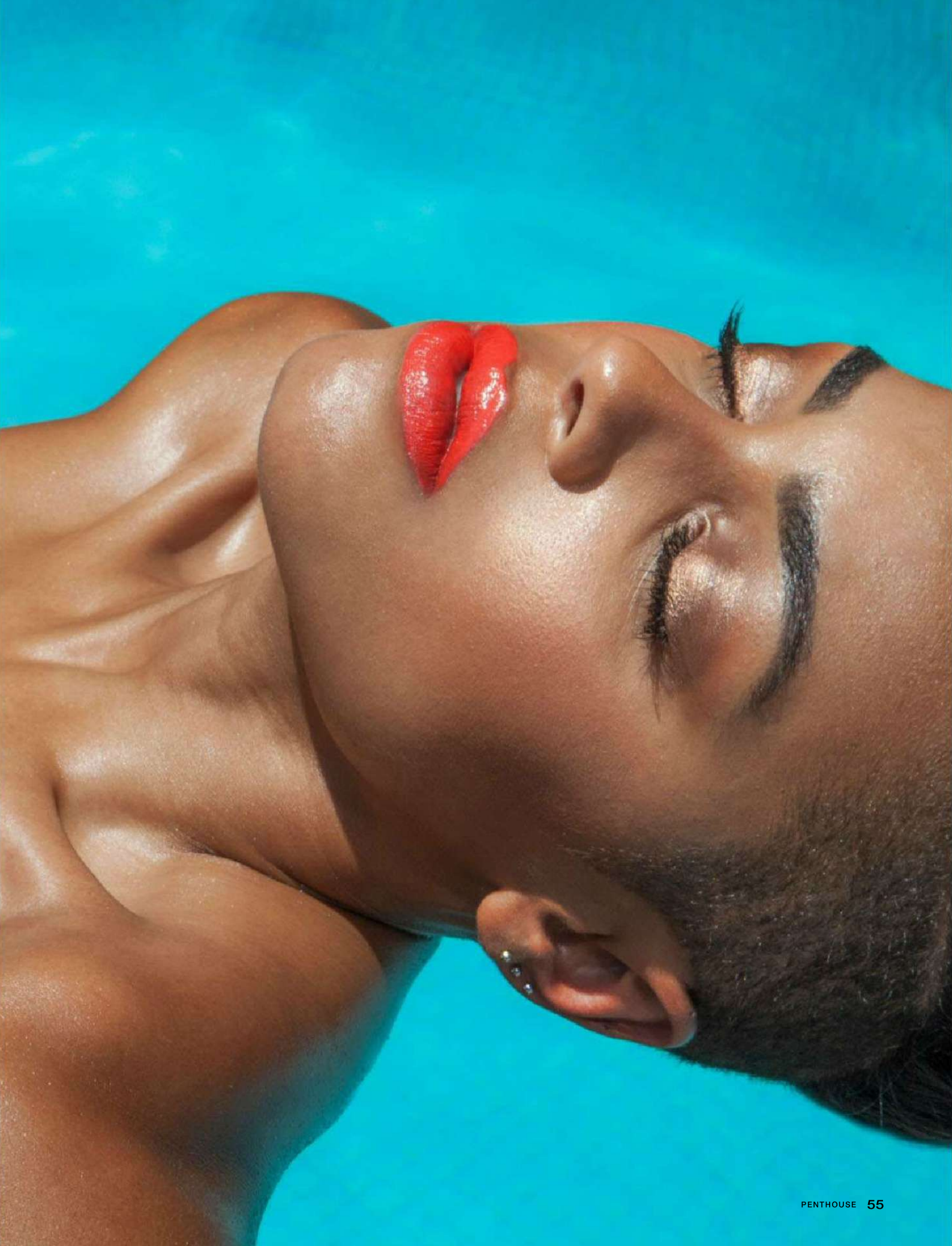


This is Natalie. She's from the UK, but she lives in Australia. She hung with photographer Toni Veziris and they took these amazing shots with make-up artist Alex Perrin. The day of the shoot was the hottest November day on record, coming in at a solid 42 degrees. Penthouse's editor, James Branson, and art director, Gavin Morrison, were, despite being in the comfort of an air conditioned office, insane with jealousy when they saw these pics come in. Thanks to Dolce + Gabanna, Ray Ban, Bausle Watches and Wicked Weasle for the gear...

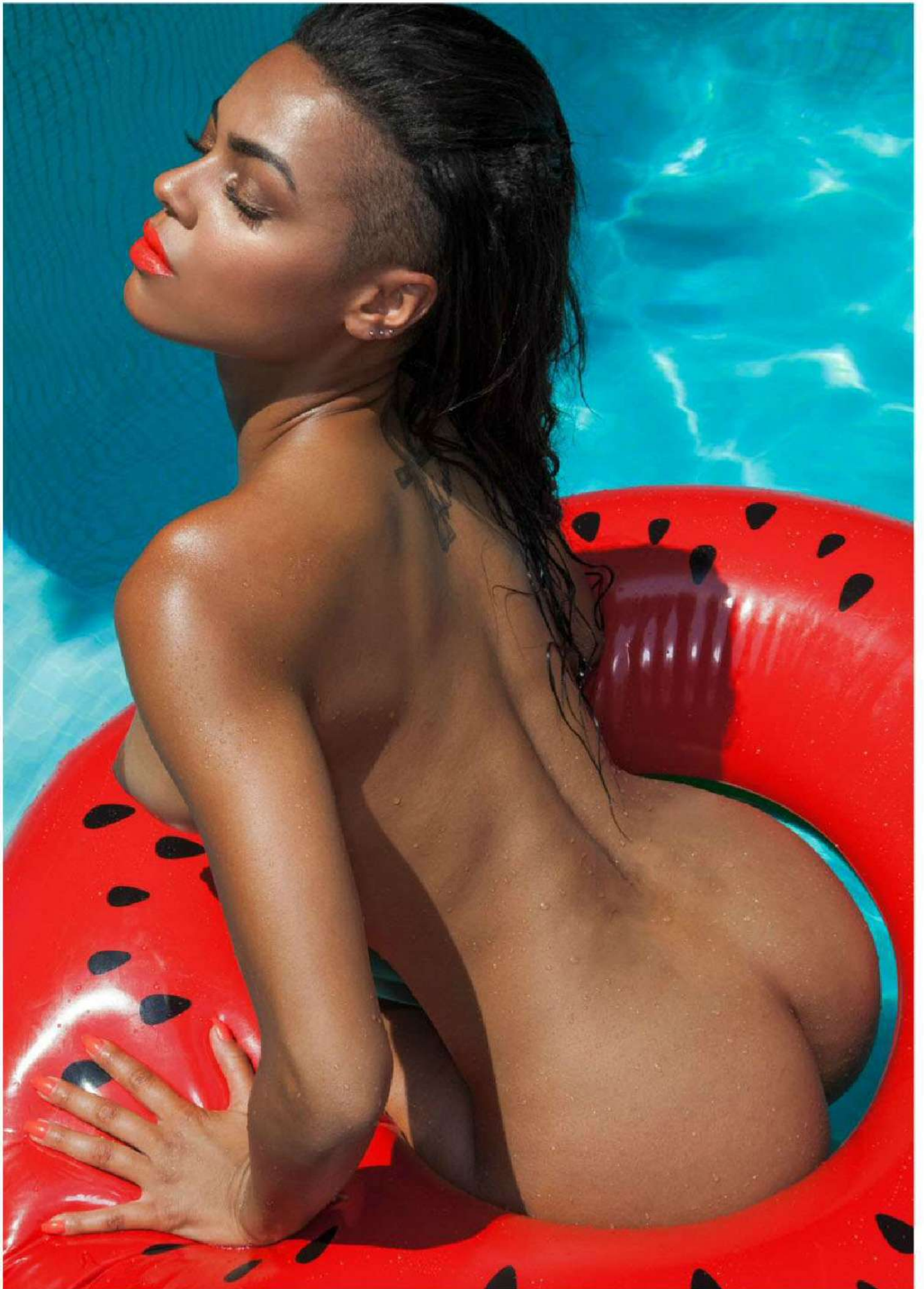






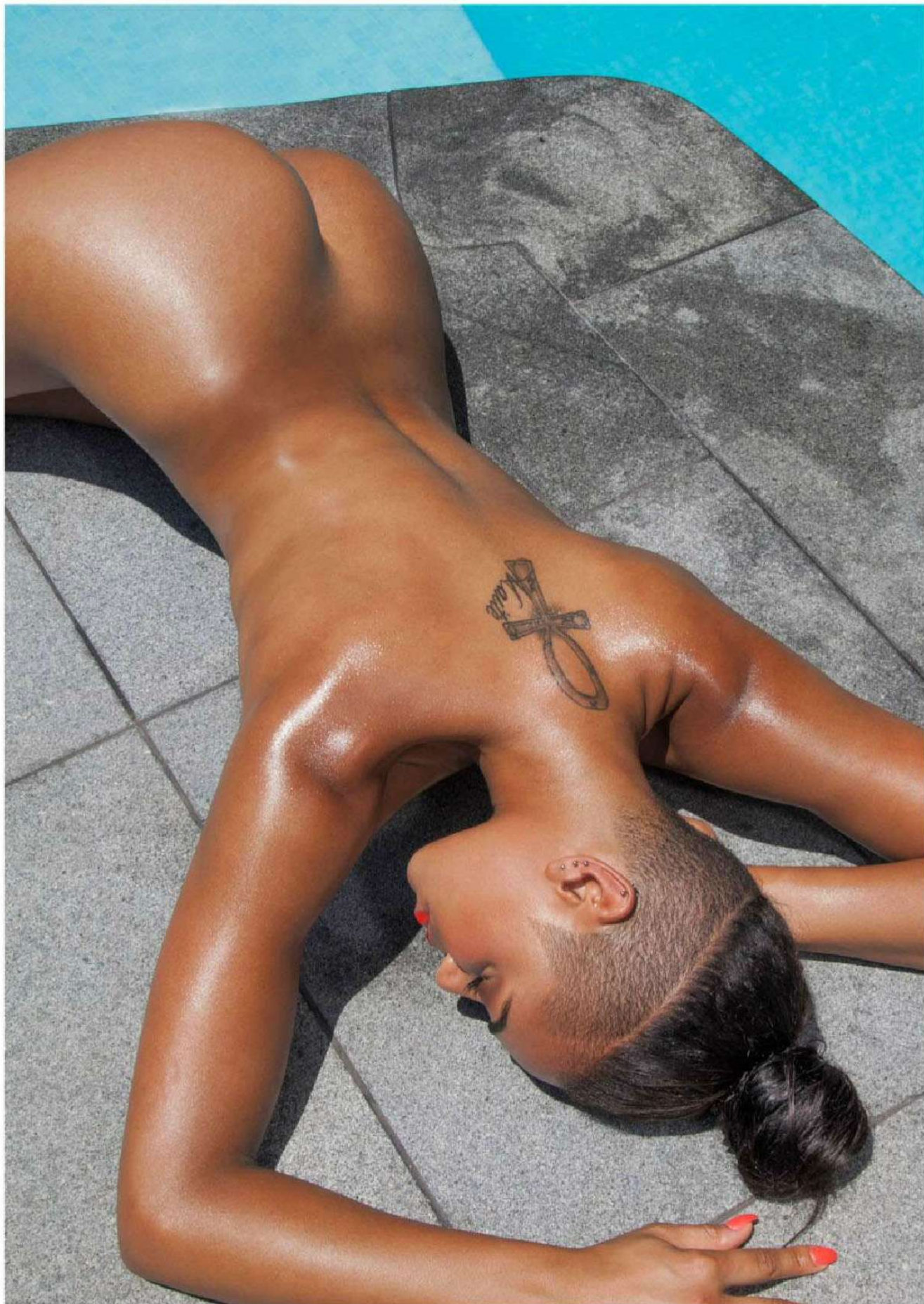
























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INTERVIEW



**I AM A
F**KING
DIRECTOR
...NO REALLY,
I DIRECT
PEOPLE
F**KING**

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, AUSTRALIA HAS A BUDDING PORN INDUSTRY. WE SPOKE TO BOURKE (NOT HIS REAL NAME), WHOSE WEBSITE, ADULT VOYUER, IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST

W

ho doesn't like a bit of porn? Nobody, that's who. And if you've got a friend who denies watching it, excommunicate them now from your crew because that person is a liar. Anyways, in the interests of filling our mission as "investigative reporters", James Branson had a chat to Bourke Parsons, the director and producer at the all-Australian adult website Adultvoyeur.com, about how porn gets made in the wonderful, God-blessed and wholesome country we call home.

OK. So making porn. I was really surprised to find someone making high-end porn here. How long have you been doing it?

About six years. I've worked in entertainment since I was 16 and someone showed me this really bad Aussie porn – backyard Canberra stuff. I thought: "I could do better than that". At the same time I was reading a lot of Tucker Max's website. His site is just stories about him basically getting drunk and hitting on girls, but it was really funny and well written. He was making more off the ads on that site than in his day job as a lawyer. So he quit. I began to wonder about how I could stop working full time for somebody else, and those two influences kind of merged. For a long time it was just an idea I was kicking around then one day I told my partner about it and she thought I'd be really good at it. The next thing I knew I was in a hotel room with some naked girls and a camera.

Were you a big porn fan or was it more about knowing that you could do

something that was of a high quality?

I've never been someone who has followed specific girls. I was never a huge fan. There are some guys who download more than they can ever watch! I enjoy it, though. But I thought I could make a great product and there's always room for a great product.

So you found yourself in this hotel room. Was it strange, when you started out, talking through scenes with actors? You must have had some conversations you never really expected to have.

There are moments when things seem kind of surreal. You step out of it and watch yourself doing something thinking: "Fuck, this is what I do now?" Most of the time you're just focusing on doing your job but, yeah, there are moments when it's surreal.

As a director, how specific do you have to be with the actors? Are you telling a guy, for example: "Ok, now you've gotta flip her around and put your finger up her butt..."?

It depends on the performer and the plan for the scene. There are some performers that we know we can put in front of camera and say: "These are your marks, I want 20 seconds of dialogue, a blowjob, he eats you out, puts you over the bench, blah blah blah..." You just give them bullet points and you know that even if they don't hit all of their marks, whatever you get is going to be good. Some other performers need some coaching. It really just depends on the person.

So I guess some of the really good scenes you get on film might be almost an improvisation from the performers.

Some of the best scenes that we've done have been ones where what we had planned wasn't really going to work and we just winged it. And it comes out really well. But other times everything is very much scripted and I have a vision of how everything should look, start to end. When we pull that off – it's great.

Are there any standout performances you've captured?

Yeah, definitely a handful. A few where I've thought: "This is something that we should be known for. This is spectacular!" There's a film we did called Squirt with Madison Messina, who just won the Best Oz Performer at the Eros awards. She came up to us during filming and told me she could squirt! So we got her on this deckchair thing – we'd rented out a beautiful farmhouse – and it was probably eight or nine at night. There was some really nice lighting, vines creeping up all over the deck, and she just masturbates and squirts. But it looks

spectacular!

Cool! I like that kind of porn where it looks like the girl is really enjoying it.

That's where I'm at as well. I can only really film what I think is sexy. I've tried to film content for others where they've expected something else and I find that really hard. What I tend to find sexiest is a girl enjoying herself. That's why I pay quite a bit of attention to her face. Because while penetration shots are good – they're sexy – what's really sexy is when the girl looks like she's fucking loving it.

There's a site called Beautiful Agony where the producer just gives the actor a camera. They hit record and the performer just films their own face, from start to finish. You don't know if they're using a toy, their fingers, if they're being fucked, whatever. All that you can see is their face. I think it's brilliant.

Is porn a tough business in Australia?

It is. It was a lot harder before we'd made a name for ourselves. When we first started out there was this very small handful of producers – models and performers didn't believe there was an industry. We'd approach them and say: "Do you want to come film with us?" and they'd assume we were a bunch of perverts. So it was hard at the start to just find people to film, and it's hard in Australia to advertise. We walk a pretty fine line. As much as you want to be known, you also don't want to attract the wrong kind of attention. Because the hard-core Christian Right takes an undue interest in you. And even when you're working within the legal boundaries they can still bring a lot of pressure to bear.

It always surprises me when people give that much of an active fuck about what people like you do.

Look, they generally don't. But what happened with Abbie Winters is a good example. They now work in Amsterdam. There was a particular reporter with a bit of a hard-on for porn being "bad". He told the Victorian police that his newspaper was going to run an article on Abbie Winters. He told the cops that he'd release the article and it could either say that the reporter had told the police and they'd done nothing or that they'd raided Abbie Winters. So the cops were pretty much straight onto it. They can't seem to not do anything.

Overall do you think you're generally just politely ignored by the authorities?

Yeah. We operate in a grey area. If they have a reason or desire to hassle us, they can. But we do everything that we can to stay inside the boundary of the law. Even though



"YEP, I AM A SMUT PEDDLER! BUT THE PORN I MAKE IS, HOPEFULLY GENUINELY GOOD TO LOOK AT"

the law is pretty vague.

That's weird. Are there things that you can or can't do?

It's just very grey. And to be honest I'd prefer to not elaborate on it. Purely for my own fear of prosecution. Now, by and large, the police would prefer to spend their time chasing, you know, actual criminals. And a guy like me, who isn't really harming anyone, they'd prefer to leave be. But piss the wrong people off and you're in trouble. If the ACL [Australian Christian Lobby] decides that you're on their hit list... you're a bit fucked.

From a legal perspective, are you allowed to film two people fucking in Australia?

There's a lot of weird laws in Australia. If you've been hanging around an area for more than – I think it's 15 minutes – and you have less than 80 pence on you, you can be done for vagrancy. 80 pence! A currency that doesn't exist in Australia anymore. And that law is still on the books. Who the fuck has 80 pence? So they can fuck me with the law if they want. There are laws that are grey, vague and ignored.

Why don't you move the operation to Canberra where it actually is legal?

That's actually not true. The idea that it's free and easy up there is a complete misnomer. The only thing about Canberra is they have

an "adult shoot license". Which runs around 20 grand a shoot.

That makes business impossible, surely?

Yep. Very much so.

The other thing I was interested in was the economics of porn. When everything's free, how do you make money?

You make it by offering something better. Because people will pay if what you offer is better than the free alternatives. Our site is not particularly expensive. People are still happy to pay for a good product. And mostly what's on tubes [the free porn sites like RedTube and YouPorn] is stolen and therefore available on almost every site. Or it's old stuff. So that combination of a good product, a good user experience and a good interface – with exclusive content – really works. We put a lot of time and money into making sure that everything on our site worked properly. But the free websites do take a chunk of our business. It's actually been shown that during a financial downturn, those free websites suck some money from paid porn. Because if you're struggling to pay your mortgage, your porn subscriptions going to go first.

Is this full time for you?

Mostly. I still work on other people's stuff,

but more and more it's become my main source of income.

So you're a pornographer!?

Yeah! I a smut peddler! But the porn I make is, I hope, genuinely good to look at, there's always context – generally the two people are a couple – everyone is having fun, it's non-degrading, and more often than not the woman is the instigator... how is that worse than, say, showing acts of extreme violence on the news? I was always brought up with the idea that sex is a beautiful, normal, human thing. So how can images of it be an affront? If the act is good, how can images of the act be somehow evil and degrading?

What do you think of that gonzo-type, handcam porn that's really popular?

It's not my thing, but if there are people buying it then I can understand why people are making it. I have to say that the "art" comes second. If a producer makes something and puts it out there and it does really well, they're going to keep heading in that direction. Content gets created because people are interested in it – so there's a market for that stuff. That being said, I don't like the production values, I don't like the second-person style...

In a lot of that porn it doesn't seem as though the girl is enjoying it either...

"WITH ALL MY PERFORMERS, IT COMES DOWN TO ATTITUDE AS MUCH AS LOOKS. I'M NOT AFRAID TO KICK SOMEONE OFF SET"



It depends on what you're watching. I know certain performers who love that shit. They love filming that abusive stuff. Of course, there are some producers out there who will get girls to do things they're uncomfortable with. And there are guys out there who probably enjoy seeing a girl be humiliated. Me personally – it ain't my thing, but that's just me. I think that popularity of styles is a swinging pendulum. Gonzo was a reaction to the high-gloss, dreamy, penthouse style, late '80s and mid-'90s porn. But that pendulum will swing back and forth forever. **Is part of the appeal of your porn that it's made featuring Australian accents?**

In the overwhelming amount of our work, we always get the actors to talk. Because there's no easier way to show that this is Australian made than to have the actors speak. We also film outdoors – Australia is beautiful, and it's pretty unique. The rest of the world is interested in Australia. And that's a good hook for the rest of the world... not only is our content well made, featuring hot sex, it's also Aussie.

How do you find girls?

At the start it was all online, primarily model websites. It took quite some time to get to a point where we don't need to do that. I've now got more people approaching me than

I can actually shoot.

There must have been some awkward conversations at the start.

Absolutely. Girls – who on their modelling profile had said they were interested in doing adult work – would stick their noses up: Porn?! Are you kidding me? Which was confusing, because if you've ticked "adult" on your profile, what else do you mean? There were people with some very strange responses. Even now we still get people who approach us and we start a conversation, and then they freak out a bit. Which is strange. You approached me! Surely you know what I do!

Probably what's happened there is that the person has liked the idea of doing porn, but when it's come to the crunch they've chickened out.

Yeah, the reality of it hits them and they realise they can't do it. This one always stood out for me: this guy emailed me saying he'd always been into porn and wanted to shoot with me. He came across as being intelligent – there's nothing I hate more than an email which says: "I wanna shoot for you, I've got a big dick, chicks love me". So this guy emails me and he seems reasonably together. At that stage we were actually looking for guys so I asked him

to send some photos. His response was: "Well, I'm sure you can understand why I'd be hesitant to email you nude photos over the net". And I said: "No! I can't understand that! If you want to do porn then photos of you nude WILL BE ON THE INTERNET!". **So what does make a great male performer?**

Being humble, firstly. I don't give a fuck how big your dick is. The best performer we had has a very normal-sized dick. I don't care how good you think you are at home, it doesn't mean you understand sex on camera. It's a whole other beast. Most guys have that ego; they think they're awesome in bed. But that's when you have sex for yourself. This isn't for you – this is for the camera. For example; you can't just square your hips up and go for it. Because then the camera can't see anything. To have the presence of mind to push the girl's hip away, then push your hip at an angle so the camera can see everything – that might seem like a small thing, but that can be hard. Generally speaking, sex for porn is not the most comfortable sex. It's not even the most pleasurable sex. Because the gratification of the end user is more important than the performer's gratification. A lot of guys who are reasonably buff, good looking and well

hung are not always the easiest guys to work with on set. There's that alpha-male thing and that tends to get in the way. The girl is already there to fuck! The alpha male thing you do in a nightclub is not helpful here. You just have to be polite, do as you're told and be friendly. We've got a guy named Rob Paulson, and he doesn't have Twitter, he's not on Facebook, he doesn't promote himself as a porn star. A lot of guys promote themselves as pornstars, leading this wild life. Rob is the opposite of that. He just comes onto set, hangs out, he's a really nice guy and all the girls love him for it. All the girls want to film with him. He's really friendly, happy and easy to get along with... and he just happens to have a really big, horse-like cock. So these guys who email us, full of bravado, are exactly what I don't want.

And what makes a great female performer?

For girls I suppose it's bit easier because aside from all the "easy to get along with, be polite" stuff I mentioned for guys, a male has to get it up and keep it up for the entire performance. Which is really hard to do. You've got not only the person you're performing with but two camera operators, a photographer, a hair and makeup person, a director yelling at you – that's a lot of pressure.

I don't think I could do that.

I know I couldn't do that. I think one in a hundred guys can. And of those, one in a hundred of them has the right attitude. Girls... they can fake it! You can't fake a hard on. And even if she's not wet, a handful of lube fixes that quick-smart.

There'd have to be a willingness to perform. Not every girl has the... balls, I guess, to fuck on camera.

Yeah. You have to be an exhibitionist, obviously. Someone who really enjoys sex and really enjoys showing that they love sex. Someone who isn't afraid to get naked, get wet, get messy, all in front of other people. And not hung up about their body. Again, we would prefer people who are not full of themselves, easy to work with and happy to take direction. We go for a classic beauty kind of look. Some producers like those fake lips, fake tits... we don't go for that. We like hips, curves... If a girl is reasonably fit and healthy, confident and feels sexy; that's sexy.

Every guy who's a decent human being likes a girl who's healthy, really.

Yeah. I mean, if a girl is naturally skinny then that looks great! But if a girl is mistreating herself to be skinny, that really shows. We like healthy, beautiful girls and that's part of our overall look. To the rest of the world, Australians have this image as being

"I THINK MAYBE ONE IN A HUNDRED GUYS HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO PERFORM FOR THE CAMERA"

THE PORN INDUSTRY BY THE NUMBERS

37%

OF THE INTERNET IS PORN

68 MILLION

SEARCHES PER DAY

6 MINUTES

THE AVERAGE TIME SPENT
WATCHING PORN.

\$3075

SPENT EVERY SECOND ON PORN

28,000

PEOPLE WATCHING RIGHT NOW

SUNDAY

THE DAY WHEN THE MOST
PORN IS WATCHED

UTAH

THE CITY WITH THE HIGHEST
PORN VIEWS PER CAPITA

tanned, happy healthy, fit and active people.

Everyone thinks we're from Bondi.

Yeah – like all our girls are surfer chicks and all the guys are surf-lifesavers. And so that's the look we go for because that's what our overseas market wants.

Where do you get most of your viewers from?

It's roughly half between the USA and Australia.

I think a lot of guys would like seeing Aussie porn. The thing that most guys want to feel when they're watching porn is the idea that maybe, just maybe, they could be sleeping with the girl on screen. And if she's Australian that makes it all the more appealing to an Australian guy.

Yeah! If she's got an Australian accent it makes it easier to imagine that you're the one fucking that girl. So Australians watch us because of that, and Americans watch us because they're interested in seeing Australians. But really, with performers, it comes down as much to attitude as it does to looks. I don't have the time on set to deal with someone being a diva or putting on a show. We try to cram as much filming in a day as we can. So if a person is behaving in a way that's making things difficult, that person is wasting my time and wasting my money. And I'm not afraid to kick someone off set. I've done it before and I'll do it again.

Does your family know what you do?

No. Well, my brother and sister both do. But my parents don't.

What do you think they'd say?

My mother would be upset and my father would be annoyed that I'd upset my mother. All he'd care about would be that mum was upset! She has that idea that a lot of middle-age, middle class people have that people who make porn are abusers.

I imagine that if you were running a company where people felt they were being abused, you'd hardly last as a business.

I wouldn't have well known adult models and strippers approaching me and wanting to work with me if I had a reputation for treating anyone badly. We treat people well. Everyone is treated respectfully. I put a lot of importance in the conversation before a shoot – figuring out what that performer is good with. Because I don't want to ask anyone to do anything outside of what they're comfortable with. You can always tell when a performer is uncomfortable. Not only – to me – is that not sexy; it doesn't align with what I want to do. It doesn't fit our look and style. We want them to be happy, we want them to be confident, we want them to enjoy it. 



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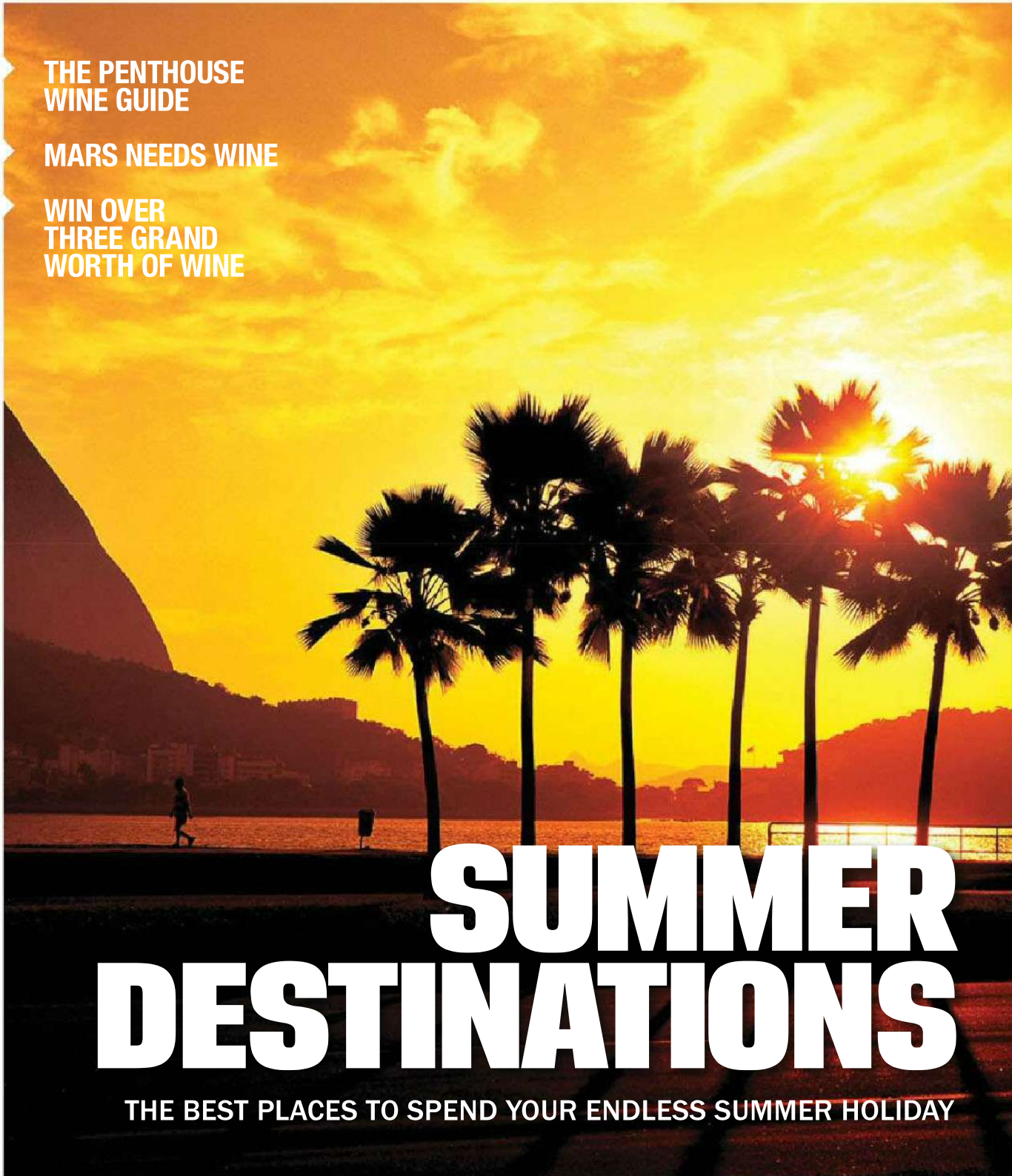
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FASHION / FOOD + DRINK / TRAVEL / LIFESTYLE

THE PENTHOUSE
WINE GUIDE

MARS NEEDS WINE

WIN OVER
THREE GRAND
WORTH OF WINE

A full-page photograph of a tropical beach at sunset. The sky is a brilliant, fiery orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon behind a cluster of palm trees. The palm trees are dark silhouettes against the bright sky. In the foreground, a person is walking along the beach, and the ocean is visible in the distance. The overall mood is warm and summery.

SUMMER DESTINATIONS

THE BEST PLACES TO SPEND YOUR ENDLESS SUMMER HOLIDAY



MARS
NEEDS
SHIRAZ

LIFE ON MARS

WHEN DAVID MUSTER WAS LAUNCHING HIS NEW RANGE OF WINES, HE LOOKED TO ANOTHER PLANET FOR INSPIRATION. THE RESULT WAS THE SCIENCE-FICTION INSPIRED 'MARS NEEDS' WINES, WRITES GAV MORRIS

You've had an absolutely mental week at work. Your boss is on your back about some report or an account or maybe a client who keeps changing their mind, one of your coworkers has been regaling you with a completely absurd tale of how he was pulled over by the police for speeding ON HIS BIKE (this actually happened to me) and that lust for life you were full of at the start of the week seems to have travelled off into another dimension entirely.

All you want to do is forget the world, have a drink and pretend you're on another planet.

That's the idea behind Mars Needs, a new range of wines from the Adelaide-based Muster Wine company.

The idea came to owner David Muster in a moment of clarity while he was trying to relax.

"I was thinking to myself, over a glass of wine and listening to David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust, that there was surely life somewhere else in the universe, and if there is... do they drink wine?"

Which is a good question, really. Surely, if super-intelligent beings exist somewhere in the universe, they've perfected the art of turning grapes into wine. It's the hallmark of all great civilisations, right?

But Muster was also inspired by more ambitious task. "There's been a lot of talk about Mars of late – running water was recently discovered there, and it got me thinking, 'wouldn't it be great to be the first supplier of wine on another planet... on Mars or beyond'".

This sense of fun and adventure has found its way into the artwork on the Mars Needs range, which saw Muster collaborate with artist Ben Ayres to create a series of labels inspired by

vintage sci-fi films.

"We wanted to tap into that romantic era of space travel, that real golden age when people were thinking there was really something out there," says Ayres.

"Old school comic books were also an influence. I started the process by looking for those kind of illustrations and sketched out some ideas. At the time, I was doing a lot of charcoal drawings to unwind, and I ended up using them as a starting point."

The result is a series of labels that instantly remind you of films like *Mars Attacks!*, *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *When Worlds Collide* – all iconic illustrations that remind you of a time when space travel was humanity's next frontier.

Muster has also removed the "wine snob" element from Mars Needs – something a lot of casual drinkers have an aversion to – and injected a sense of fun not only into the packaging but into the wines themselves.

"We want wines that are approachable, fruit driven and enjoyable," Muster says.

Which is not to say that Mars Needs wines aren't also a quality product – Indeed, the Mars Needs Shiraz was awarded 93 points in *Wine Showcase Magazine*. "They're all really serious, small-batch wines, from premium vineyards in the Clare and Barossa valleys. We really do stack up," says Muster. "And the Shiraz has become one of our best sellers."

Okay. Time for me to quit writing, go home, enjoy the weekend and pretend I'm on Mars.

Mars Needs comes in three varieties: A silky smooth Shiraz, a juicy, spicy Merlot and a fresh Moscato. Head over to musterwineco.com.au for more.



SUPER-PREMIUMS, WINE WANKERS AND THE JOY OF \$20 WINES!

KIM BREBACH ON HOW SNOBS INFLATED THE PRICE OF WINE, AND HOW
YOU CAN NOW FIND SOME OF THE BEST FOR UNDER \$20

Not so long ago, even the best French wines were affordable. In the early eighties, you could buy third-growth Bordeaux like 1978 Chateau Montrose for around \$30. Good Burgundies cost a bit more, and great Sauternes & Barsacs a bit more again – about \$60, \$70 for a full bottle of Rieussec. Expensive yes, but not ridiculous.

It was in the early nineties that US Wall Street types drove the prices of French wines up in a Robert Parker-induced frenzy. Parker is to wine what Steve Jobs was to Apple. Bordeaux and Burgundies floated out of the reach of ordinary people.

The Italians wanted a piece of the action and cranked up the prices and marketing of their 'Super-Tuscans' reds, made from Cabernet and Merlot rather than the prescribed traditional varieties. The government even created a special classification for Super Tuscans: Indicazione Geografica Tipica.

Some of our makers down-under followed suit, dusting off old labels or creating new ones, such as Wynns Michael Hermitage and John Riddoch Cabernet, Penfolds Yattarna and RWT,

Many of the wines I used to buy had simply become more expensive, not more enjoyable, and the new wines that popped out of the fancy new boutiques of the Yarra Valley, the Mornington Peninsula and Tasmania came with fancy new price tags as well. Our wine writers gushed about new designer labels as if they were handed down from heaven and a new generation of serious sommeliers with sharp features and sharper haircuts made you feel like they were allowing you into very exclusive clubs where you were privileged to be offered wine and food that was made for the Gods.

A FEW YEARS AGO, I WAS STAYING IN A FRIEND'S over Christmas, and I saw the new face of Aussie wine in his fridge and drinks cupboard: Yellow Tail, any way you liked it. Red or white, Cabernet or Chardonnay. Like most punters out there, my friend is confused by the vast numbers of wines that fill up the shelves of our grog shops. It was an simple decision to buy a brand that provided easy drinking wines that were also

THERE WAS A LOT OF \$10 WINE AROUND IN THE EARLY
NINETIES. NOBODY SEEMED TO CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY
OR THE PRICE. WE WERE SHIFTING BOATLOADS

Clarendon Hills Astralis and Petaluma Tiers. It didn't take long for \$100 price tags to become the norm for premium wines.

In his book *Why the French Hate Us*, Campbell Mattinson describes a Barossa Valley covered in a smoke haze from burning vines. It wasn't a bushfire, but a government-sponsored vine-pull scheme. It was the mid 1980s and Aussies had yet to discover the virtues of our big, warm, cuddly reds. Shiraz muffins and Cabernet comfitures just couldn't shift the surplus. Barossa shiraz from old vines brought \$275 per ton, Grenache \$190.

It only took a couple of visits from Robert Parker for Shiraz to fetch \$3000 a ton. When he gave close to 100 points to Duck Muck from Heathcote, prices went to over \$1000 a case.

In the first decade of the new millennium, the asking price for Penfold's Grange shot up to \$500. Mount Edelstone, a wine I used to buy for \$4, shot up to \$100. In Bordeaux, Chateaux Petrus and Le Pin stormed past \$1000 a bottle.

easy on the pocket.

He didn't know that the export bubble had burst, that the Argentinians and Chileans had beaten us in the overseas supermarket price wars, and that he was drinking the same wine Americans used to buy at half the \$9 he'd paid. The giant worm had turned on itself, at a time when we had an excess of 100 million cases of wine in this country. The Casellas in Griffith had installed the world's fastest bottling line at the height of the boom in Griffith: it could handle 58,000 bottles an hour.

All that excess grog drove prices down across the board, most of all in the under \$20 segment. You could buy Annie's Lane Rieslings and reds for \$10, Jim Barry Riesling for \$12, and Pewsey Vale for \$14. Even a boutique red like the Teusner Riebeck Shiraz was only \$17, and I remember buying Wynns Coonawarra Cabernet 2009 (the old black label) for \$20. The downside for the wine industry was an upside for consumers.

Kim Brebach runs the website Best Wines Under 20.

PENTHOUSE

W I N E S O F S U M M E R



QUORUM 2010 CABERNET SHIRAZ LANDCROSS 2014 SAUVIGNON BLANC

ADELAIDE WINEMAKERS

Quorum represents the finest wines that Adelaide Winemakers has to offer. Each vintage, the best wines from each region are reviewed by the winemaking team comprising Sam Watkins, Andrew Locke, David Watkins and Warren Randall after they have been meticulously cellared in carefully chosen oak barrels. Only a unanimous quorum will allow a blend to make the cut. Quorum is an elegant and powerful wine that will reward medium term cellaring.

As for the Landcross 2014 Sauvignon Blanc... great wines know no boundaries! The Landcross releases are always fresh and vibrant wines that are not restricted to a single wine region. Fruit is chosen from across the Land that best displays the purest expression of the variety. These wines are best enjoyed young and bright and there's no time like the present!



TOMICH HILL PINOT NOIR TOMMICH WINES

The Adelaide Hills continues to establish itself as a genuine home of Pinot Noir in Australia and the Tomich Hill 2013 Hilltop is a stunning example from a fantastic vintage. Hand picked, wild fermented, and matured in French oak, it has everything you want in a great Pinot – a vibrant palate of dark berry and cherry with subtle hints of dry herbs and silky graceful tannins. This exquisite wine will pair perfectly with quail, duck and lean red meat. Find out more at tomichwines.com.au



OUTLAW SHIRAZ OUTLAW WINES

Outlaw Shiraz is a big, bold expression of a gutsy and salacious wine with matched tannins and acid as it runs over your gums creating a mindful explosion of fruit and pleasure. Dark plums, charcoal and tobacco this wine is all about drinking and feeling the love inside the bottle. In fact, the Penthouse editorial team is having a glass of this right now as we put the finishing touches on this issue, and we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves. Head to www.outlawwines.com.au for more.



MARS NEEDS MOSCATO

MARS NEEDS WINES

One of our favourite whites for summer. Don't let anyone tell you this Moscato is girly. This is the quintessential brunch wine, whatever the time whatever the place. Light, refreshing, beautifully balanced, crisp... The perfect way to start the day and great with spicy Asian food too.



THE GENTLEMAN'S COLLECTION

LINDEMANS WINES

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YOU COLLECTION

AUSTRALIAN VINTAGE LIMITED

Australian Vintage Limited has launched a new range of YOU Wines targeted at the Gen Y market. Available nationwide through Dan Murphy's, the range features four wines including Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, and goes to an easy on the pocket \$12.99.



THE KILLER COLLECTION

KILLER WINES

This wonderfully refreshing white from the north of Italy has crisp flavours of pear and apple with a flinty, mineral core. It is the Killer alternative to other aromatic whites that don't suit food pairing as much as Pinot Grigio does. They also have some really cool art on the bottles, so there's that to enjoy too.



BOBBY LOWE SPARKLING MERLOT

LOWE WINES

The new 'Bobby Lowe' Sparkling Merlot is made from organically grown grapes from Lowe's Mudgee vineyards. This is a wine with bright Merlot fruit flavours that must be served sparkling cold. Wondering what to drink on a hot January afternoon? This should be one of your go-to wines.



ROBERT OATLEY SAUVIGNON BLANC

ROBERT OATLEY VINEYARDS

2012 Robert Oatley Signature Series Margaret River Founder Robert Oatley reckons all wine should be a "darned good drink", and this wine demonstrates that in spades. It's not fancy or snobbish in its personality, it's just satisfying and refreshing with aromas of lime citrus, tropical fruit salad.



WIN

The
PENTHOUSE

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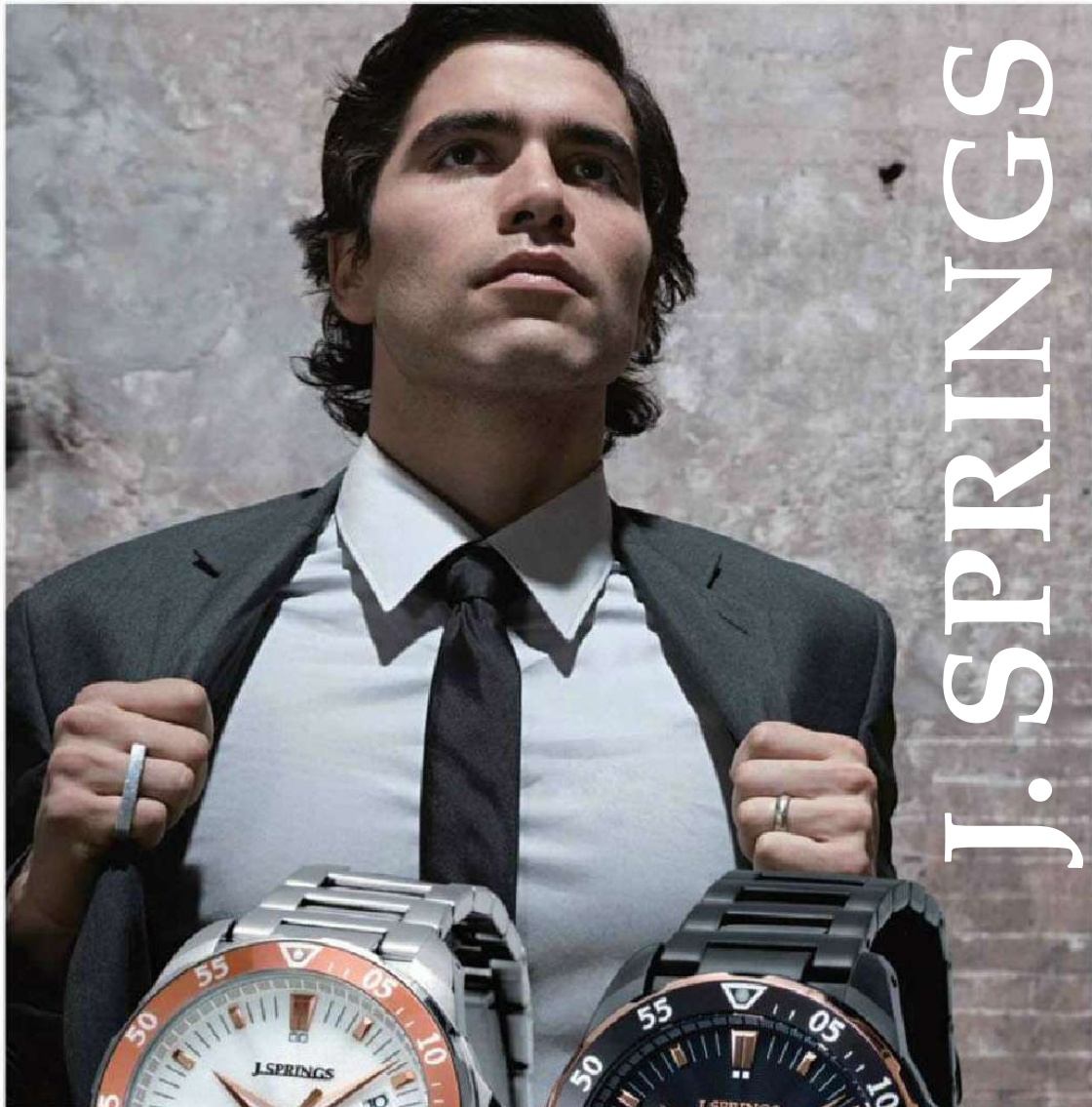
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THE PENTHOUSE GUIDE TO SUMMER

Summer is the king of seasons. The beaches are full, the women are scantily-clad, the parties are wild and the booze is flowing. And despite Australia having a particularly beautiful vibe during the summer months, it's also a great time to get away. Here's our guide to the best summer destinations...



RIO DE JANEIRO

January is the middle of the wet season in Rio de Janeiro, but this is the typical tropical rain pattern that almost always amounts to a 30-minute downpour a few times a week, and sunny skies before and after that. This is a very busy time of the year for Rio, behind only Carnival the following month for crowds and hotel rates, but it's still relatively cheap and it's an amazing place to visit at any price.

Hotels along the famous beaches will be quite expensive in January so finding a bargain will be tough, but if you are willing to stay 2 or 3 blocks inland you can find nice places for a fraction of the price. Book well in advance to get the best deals since in a busy season.



‘
**THE BEACHES ARE FULL,
THE BEER IS FLOWING,
THE WOMEN ARE
SCANTILY-CLAD: SUMMER
IS MOST CERTAINLY
THE KING OF ALL THE
SEASONS**
,’



CEBU, THE PHILLIPINES

For sunshine, diving, beaches and festivals – or a combination of all of these – make for Cebu in January. The weather at this time is relatively cool and dry (no promises), but with average highs of around 30°C, that's warm enough for most travellers to enjoy this central hub in the Visayas.

Laze on white-sand beaches, dive with sharks off Malapascua Island, witness the amazing sardine run of Moalboal, or explore the history, museums and nightlife of Cebu City. Stick around for the third Sunday of the month to see the costumes, music and dancing of the mighty Sinulog Festival, when Cebu City hosts pilgrims from all over the country.



LIMA, PERU

January is definitely part of the high season in Lima, but it's still quite affordable by international standards. The weather will be pretty much perfect with warm days, mild evenings and pretty much no chance of rain all month. Many middle and upper class people from around South America will be in Lima on their vacations, so it's an interesting mix of people for an outsider.

The historic city center is quite interesting, but many will choose to stay in the trendy Miraflores district along the beach instead. There's more restaurants and tourist infrastructure there, yet it's a short ride into the center for sightseeing.

CANCUN, MEXICO

There's at least a small chance that it will rain a bit during January in Cancun, but keep in mind that the showers tend to be over in 30 to 60 minutes and that they often take place overnight. Aside from that, it's pretty much perfect in this huge resort area this time of year, and value is still good. Room rates are highest in the first week of the month, so you'll save by arriving after that.

It's worth noting that Cancun is a huge area with plenty to offer. The actual hotel zone in is mostly high-rise hotels overlooking beaches, but if you travel about an hour south you'll arrive in Playa del Carmen, which is a lovely and tourist-friendly town, with smaller hotels and excellent choices for dining, nightlife, and shopping.



**CANCUN IS PRETTY MUCH
PERFECT THIS TIME OF
YEAR, AND HAS A HUGE
RESORT AREA WITH
PLENTY OF GOOD VALUE
HOTELS OVERLOOKING
THE BEACH**

THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean in January is a bit of a paradox here because it's the busiest month of the year, and prices are relatively high, but there are still many cheap options available if you know where to look. The cities are better if you are in the mood for a bit of culture, but for those mainly looking to relax in the sun, you can't beat the Caribbean in January.

The new trend is towards all-inclusive hotels, but they are mainly concentrated in only a few places. Specifically, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica are where you'll find most accommodation, although many cheaper hotels can be found on the Mexican coast. For most people, an all-inclusive resort will end up saving a lot of money, as long as you aren't so interested in exploring a whole island.





CARTENEGA, COLUMBIA

January marks the best weather of the year in Cartagena and most of Colombia: days will be uniformly sunny and warm, but rarely too hot, and nights are pleasant as well. With almost no rainfall in the forecast you can confidently leave the umbrella at home and work on your tan as long as you like. Of course the first week of January is still the peak season for hotels and flights, and the rest of the month is in high season, so hotel deals might be challenging to find. On the other hand, it'll still be far cheaper than almost anywhere else in the Caribbean, so if you can't afford Cartagena you should stay home.



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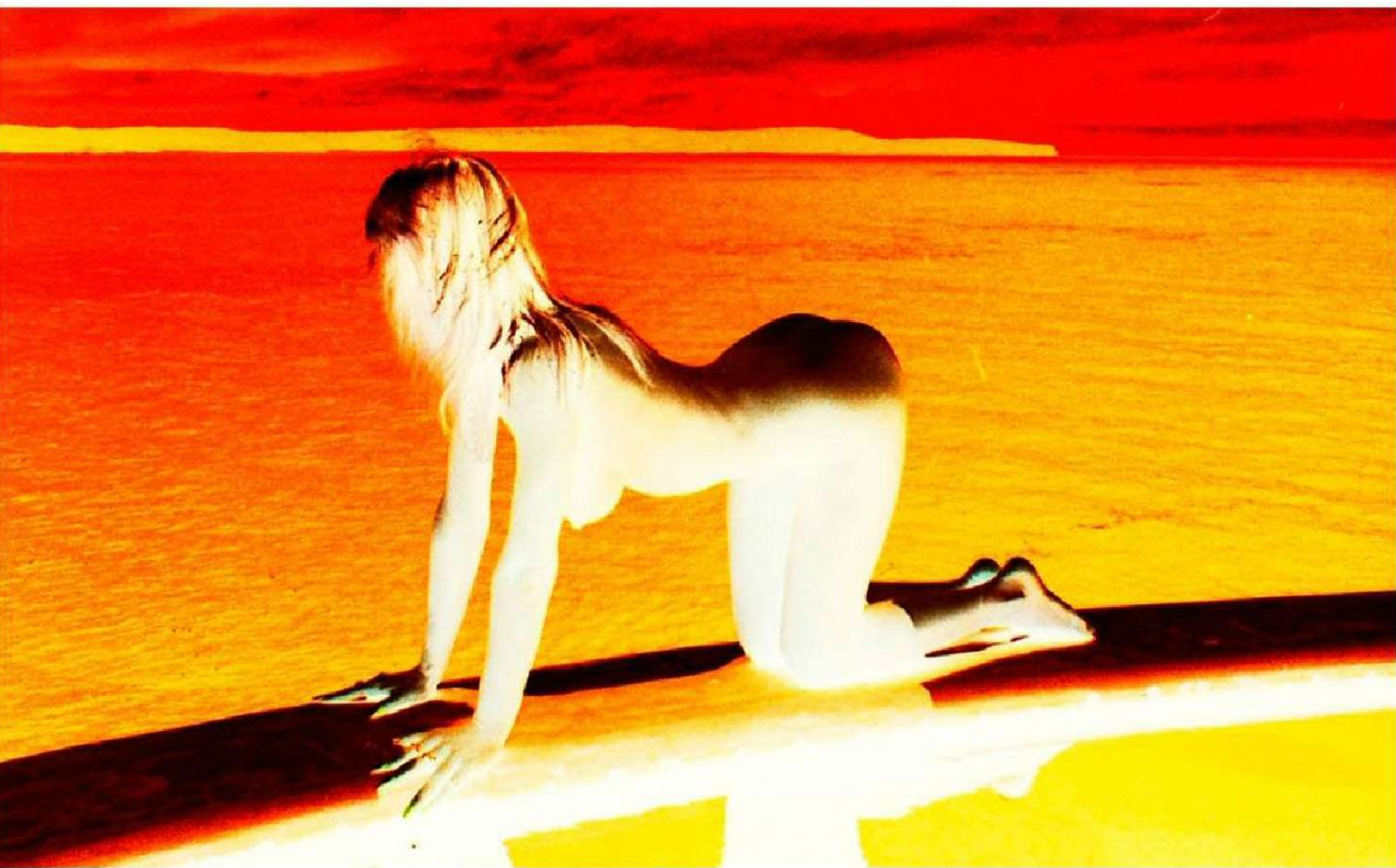


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Endless Summer

Sometimes, work is just plain fun. It certainly was when we put this summer special together. Penthouse has an enormous backlog of summer shoots from the '70s, '80s and early '90s – before digital film and surgical enhancements became the norm. When the women were... real. This month, Gav Morrison (our art director) and James Branson (our editor) went on the search, pilfering through old boxes and crates, scanning hundreds of film negatives and scouring the office for old shoots. We're pretty damn happy with the result...

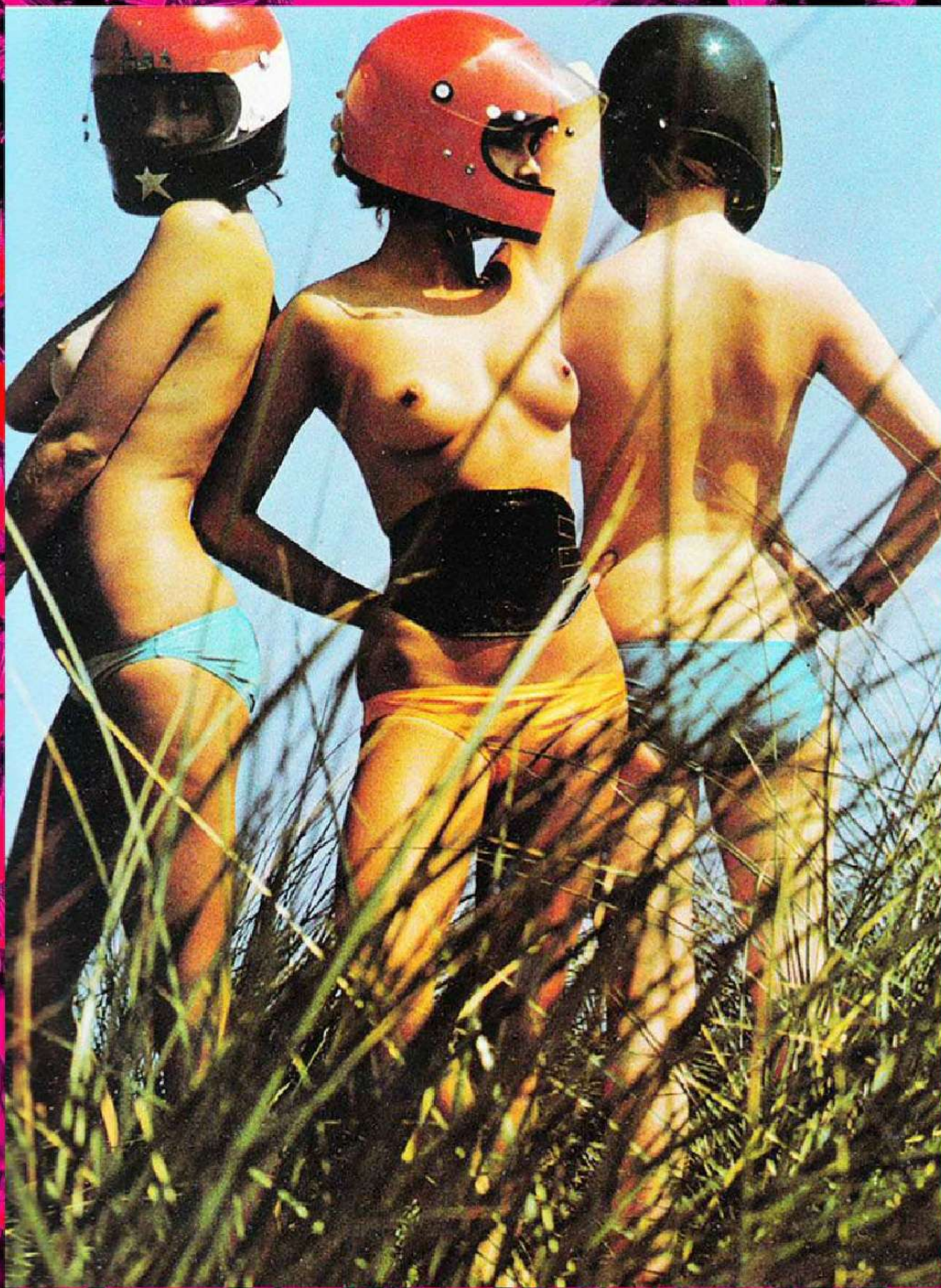


















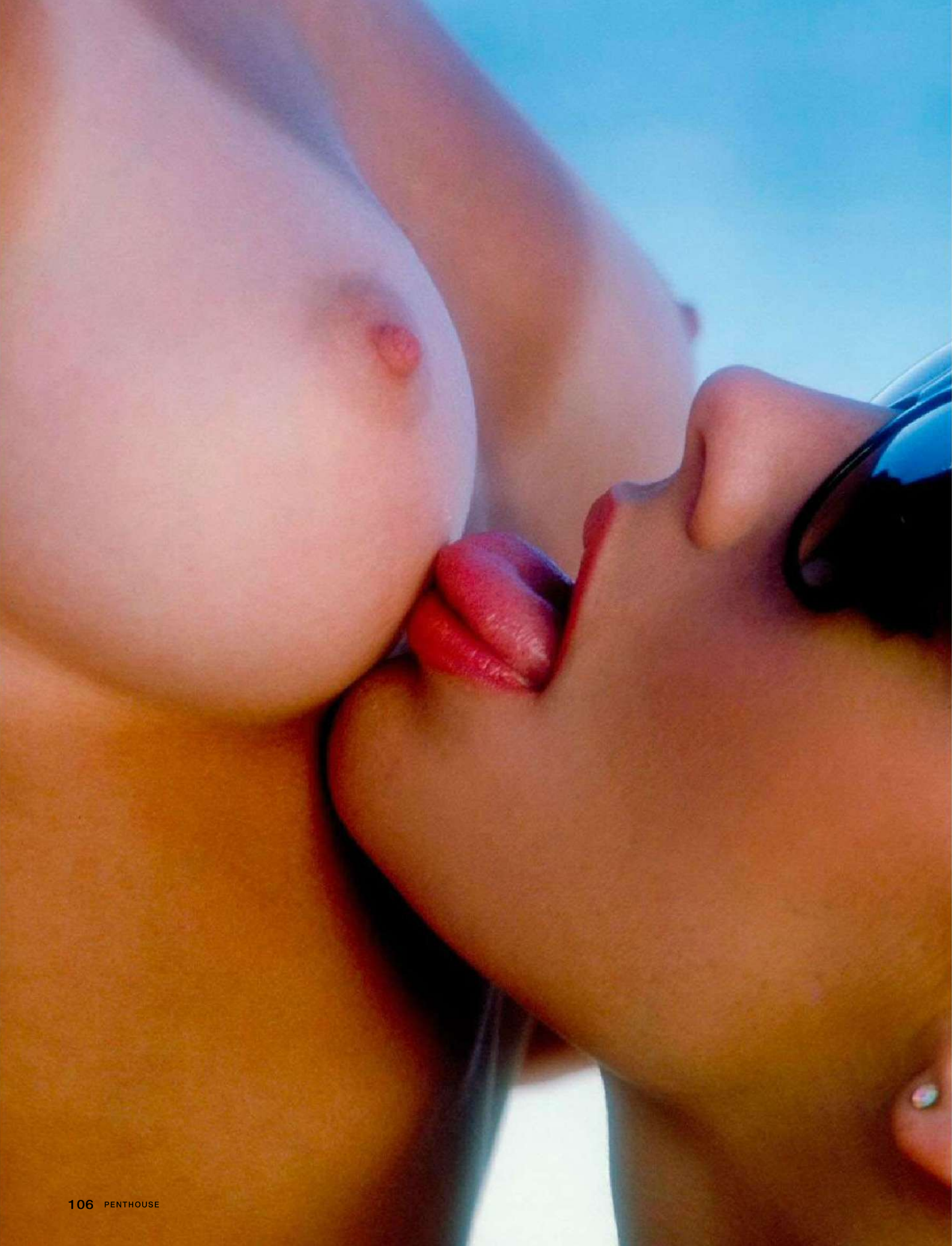












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A woman with long, wavy brown hair is shown from the waist up, wearing a black halter-neck bikini top. She is drinking from a clear plastic water bottle and has her head tilted back. Her hair is blowing in the wind. The background is a bright blue sky and a sandy beach with other people in the distance.

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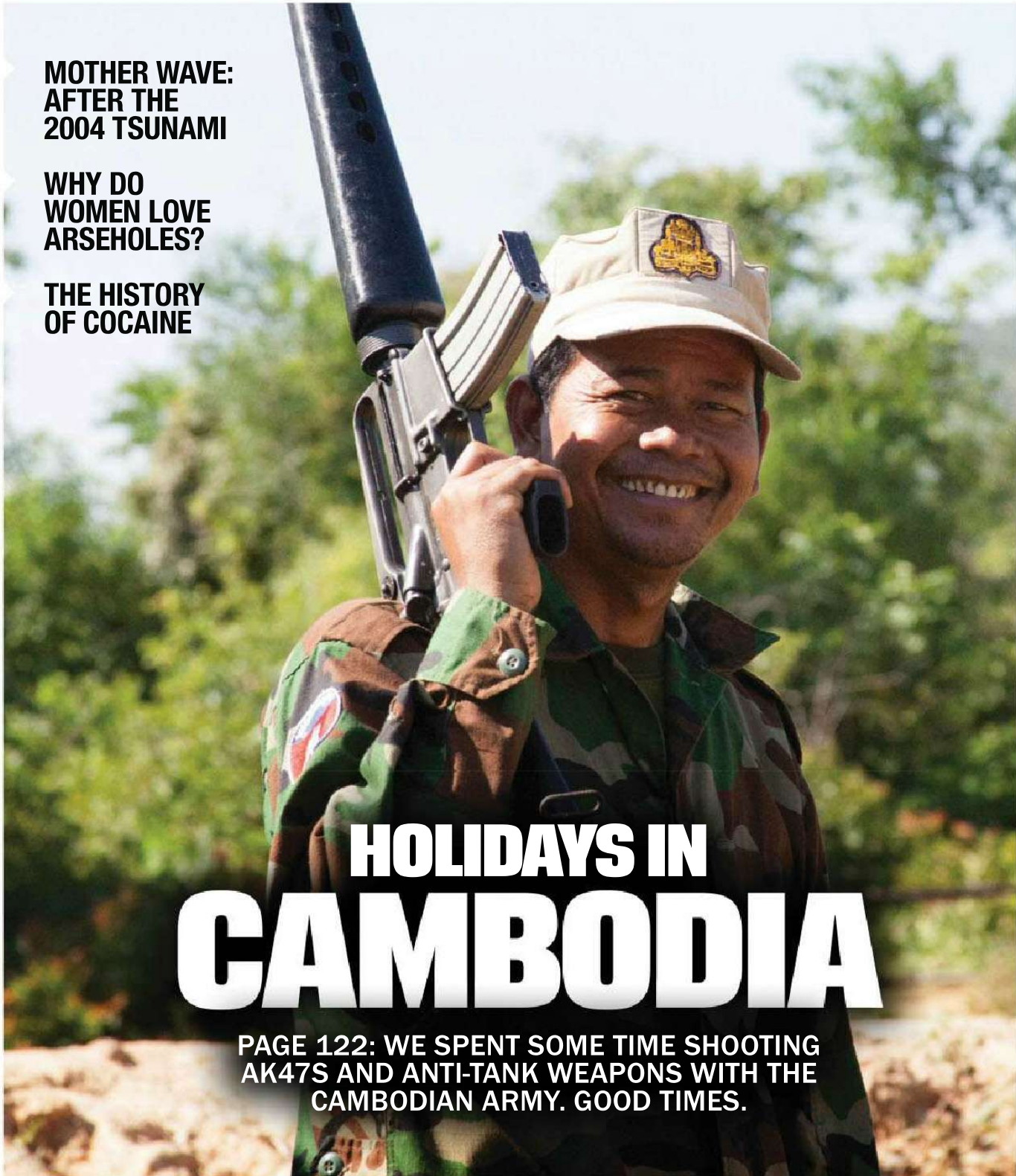
FEATURES

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**MOTHER WAVE:
AFTER THE
2004 TSUNAMI**

**WHY DO
WOMEN LOVE
ARSEHOLES?**

**THE HISTORY
OF COCAINE**



HOLIDAYS IN CAMBODIA

**PAGE 122: WE SPENT SOME TIME SHOOTING
AK47S AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS WITH THE
CAMBODIAN ARMY. GOOD TIMES.**





THE MOTHER WAVE

DURING THE 2004 BOXING DAY TSUNAMI, 280,000 PEOPLE WERE KILLED. MATTEO FAGOTTO VISITED ACEH, THE INDONESIAN PROVINCE THAT WAS HIT THE HARDEST, TO SPEAK TO SURVIVORS AND SEE HOW THE AREA HAS RECOVERED FROM ONE OF THE MOST DEVASTATING NATURAL DISASTERS OF RECENT TIMES.

I keep on praying God to reunite with my dead children in dream, one day. So far, it's never happened". After more than one hour of interviews, 44-year-old Armansiah Nyong is about to crack in tears for the first time. His new family, a wife and two young kids, immediately grasp the gravity of the moment, listening respectfully without uttering a word. The silence outside their new house is broken only by occasional blows of wind, making Nyong's words even more solemn.

After a brief moment of commotion, this calm, well-built man regains his composure. "The tsunami will always be in my mind" he adds, his voice descending into a sort of whisper. "At least once a month, I have nightmares of waves submerging me".

At 7.59 am on the 26th December 2004, a 9.1-magnitude-earthquake, whose epicentre was located 160 km off the west coast of Sumatra, triggered the most powerful tsunami ever recorded in history. The quake unleashed a series of deadly waves up to 30 meters high, which devastated the shores of fifteen countries along the Indian Ocean, killing an estimated 280,000 people and displacing more than 1,6 million.

With eighty percent of the deaths, the Indonesian province of Aceh was the hardest hit. Here, the deadly waves destroyed 800 kilometres of coastline, killing entire families and wiping out thousands of villages in a matter of seconds. Just like many others in this city on the Western tip of Sumatra, Nyong is a survivor.

THE MOTHER WAVE

IT WAS A SUNDAY MORNING AND NYONG WAS SERVING as a rescue coast guard on the beach of Ulee Lheue, a Banda Aceh coastal neighbourhood which would later be dubbed ground zero of the tsunami, for the utter destruction it experienced. The day was sunny and the beach was already packed with people walking and exercising. With his house only 200 metres away from the shoreline, Nyong had briefly gone home to check on his pregnant wife, leaving his two kids, aged 2 and 6, with a friend.

A few minutes before 8am, a powerful earthquake struck the city. "It was very strong, my wife and I had to lay on the ground" he recounts. "When it ended, there were a lot of cracks on the house walls". Alarmed, Nyong went back to the beach, but was unable to locate his children. There, he noticed the ocean water had suddenly receded, leaving a myriad of dying fish on a stretch of sand as wide as the eye could see. "People were running into the dry ocean to collect the fish, hurrying others to join" continues Nyong, his now charged tone of voice almost anticipating the catastrophe. "I didn't go. It looked weird to me, as if something bad was about to happen".

A few minutes later, Nyong spotted a gigantic body of white foam on the horizon. The water was approaching the coastline at 800 kms per hour, accompanied by deafening booms. When Nyong realized he had to run away, it was too late. He was knocked down by a huge mass of water while still close to the coastline. The second wave completely submerged him. When the third and biggest wave hit Ulee Lheue, the high fronds of coconut palms were the only visible things. A strong, portly man, Nyong managed to swim atop of the wave and grab an empty plastic tank to float. The scene around him was apocalyptic: the city had turned into sea, its blackened waters carrying all kinds of debris, from cars to pieces of roofs... and corpses. The water was rushing towards the town centre, destroying everything in its way. "At a certain point I bumped into a woman who was being carried by the stream" he continues, gesturing heavily as if he was still inside the water. "I tried to hold her head under my arm, but the flow was so strong it swallowed her".

Desperate to survive, Nyong managed to cling to the roof of a house. While he was trying to climb on it, he got hit in the back by a large piece of wood and almost fainted. About to drown, he managed to reach and grab a huge wooden log with his final ounce of strength. The log was big and heavy enough to destroy everything in its passage and Nyong rode on it for what seemed like an eternity.

When the water finally started receding he ended up stranded four kilometres inland in what is now a big downtown park. "After I regained consciousness, I saw total mayhem" he continues. "There were dead bodies all around. People were breaking into shops, desperate for food and water". Nyong was almost naked, his skin completely blackened. A few hours later, he was finally rescued and brought to a makeshift camp, set up in the offices of the Indonesian Government TV station.

Only on the following day was he able to grasp the magnitude of the disaster. Spurred by the initial earthquake, the three waves had completely flattened the coastal neighbourhoods of Banda

Aceh, leaving the city with 90,000 deaths and no electricity, running water, roads or telephone lines. Desperate to find his family, Nyong decided to head back to Ulee Lheue, climbing on piles of trash, debris and bodies for two hours in order to reach his home. The area had been completely destroyed, parts of it literally swallowed by the sea and turned into a lagoon. Heartened by the countless stories of family reunifications following the tsunami, Nyong kept on scouring every displaced camp in town for two years. To this day, he still doesn't know what happened to his family. As for the rest of his relatives, "I lost so many I can't even count them".

NYONG REMARRIED IN 2007 AND TODAY HE LIVES WITH his new wife and two children in a cream-coloured house on Jackie Chan Hill (formally known as the Indonesia-China Friendship Village), an anonymous, Chinese-donated relocation site on the outskirts of Banda Aceh, built on the foot of a hill. The area is mostly inhabited by families whose original land had been swallowed up by the ocean or deemed too dangerous to continue living on.

While it took four months to clean the dirt and the grease from his skin, the memories of his lost ones will follow Nyong for much longer time, but the man himself doesn't like self-pitying. "I lost my family, but I also started a new chapter in life, even if it took

a lot of strength" he points out, still positive and forward-looking. Just like him, hundreds of thousands of survivors whose existence had been crushed by the tsunami found the inner strength to cope with its consequences and rebuild their lives from scratch. Far from being just sad and heart-wrenching, their stories are incredibly inspiring and full of hope at the same time.

Eleven years after that infamous Boxing Day, Banda Aceh is very different from the post-tsunami ghost city whose scenes of utter destruction shocked the world. Thanks to one of the biggest international relief efforts

ever, and a massive pouring of aid money which totalled 7-billion-USD, the city was rebuilt in less than three years by hundreds of foreign and local NGOs coordinated by the Indonesian Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh (BRR).

All over the region, BRR reconstructed 140,000 houses, 1,700 schools and almost 4,000 kms of road. The affected areas were turned into new residential complexes made of basic, identical matchbox houses, which allowed authorities to provide decent dwellings for more than 500,000 displaced in a relatively short period of time.

New relocation sites were created for villages deemed too unsafe to be reoccupied, as well as for those people who didn't have land titles before the tsunami or whose land had been erased by the sea.

Today, a series of wide, neat boulevards punctuated with palm trees and flowerbeds link Banda Aceh's bustling city centre with the coastline. What is left of Ulee Lheue and the old port area is now protected by a seawall, while other neighbourhoods have been shielded from the sea by rows of mangroves. In case of another tsunami, the wide boulevards and a series of clearly indicated escape routes are supposed to facilitate the evacuation of the coastal areas, together with a brand new early warning system and several escape buildings made of large, high-ground terraces which can shelter thousands of people. "I think we are better

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’





equipped now than before” confirms Illiza Sa’aduddin Djamal, the elegantly dressed, distinguished middle-aged woman who has been the mayor of Banda Aceh since 2007. “The city landscape has been totally changed and is now one of the best in Indonesia”.

THE INNER SCARS OF THAT TRAUMATIC EVENT HAVE been much more difficult to mend. A deeply religious Muslim society, Acehnese have rationalized the event by ascribing it to the will of God, interpreting it as a wake-up call or punishment sent to a supposedly sinful community. “Religion became the medicine in order to recover from our traumas” explains 62-year-old Sulaiman Amin, the imam of Lampuuk, a small village on the outskirts of Banda Aceh whose mosque was the only building still standing after the tsunami. “You can imagine the power of God” he says solemnly, looking with admiration at the whitewashed columns and black dome that withstood the rage of the water. Amin, who lost not only his wife and 18-year-old son, but also a small rice processing factory for which he never received any compensation, was chosen as the new imam from the community three years after the tsunami. “I survived because of God’s will and I have to honour it” he says convincingly.

The destruction caused by the tsunami was also instrumental in ending a bloody 29-year-long civil war, prompting the 2005 peace agreement between the Indonesian government and the independent rebels of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Some, like 52-year-old Saifuddin Bantasyam, Director at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at Syiah Kuala University, even define the tsunami as a blessing in disguise. “Despite all the deaths, the loss of property and the suffering of the survivors, the tsunami offered Aceh the opportunity to rebuild its society through the peace agreement” he explains. “People now are more united than before”.

However, many describe themselves as still being traumatized by the tsunami and run away from their houses in panic everytime a small tremor occurs, a fairly common event in this highly seismic region. Others find it difficult to accept what happened to their loved ones. “In the first year after the tsunami I used to think ‘Why did I survive? Wasn’t it better to go together with my sons?’ I still have these thoughts sometimes” confesses 49-year-old Yusnida, a melancholic woman from the area of Lampaseh.

A few meters away from her reconstructed matchbox house lays the skeleton of what used to be a beautiful two-storey-villa, adorned with columns and decorated with white-and-green tiles. The woman thinks about the tsunami every time she looks at it. “I laid stranded there between the second and the third wave, before the stream finally brought me in the open sea” she remembers.

An oyster collector and the mother of three children, two of whom were killed by the waves, Yusnida spent almost twelve hours at sea before being rescued by some fishermen. She was able to return to her reconstructed house two years after the tsunami, only to find the atmosphere of the village dramatically changed, with the thousands of victims replaced by newcomers. “They frequently ask questions about the tsunami, but nobody can understand what being a survivor feels like” explains Yusnida, who describes it as a weird mix of joy and sadness. Bonded forever by their tragic experiences, the survivors of Lampaseh often organize ceremonies for the end of Ramadan and the tsunami anniversaries. There, they eat and pray together, sharing the stories of their lost relatives. “I speak about my sons and listen to the others’ experiences” Yusnida explains. “I feel relieved, it’s a big weight off my heart”.

All of Banda Aceh is dotted with memories of the event, from the Tsunami Museum, whose structure dominates the downtown area, to plaques, stranded boats turned into tsunami memorials,

THE MOTHER WAVE

poles marking the height reached by the water and mass graves. The biggest, a barren, neatly mown lawn at the entrance of Ulee Lheue, hosts the remains of 14,800 people. Seldom visited by the locals, the whole complex retains a peaceful but eerie atmosphere, emphasized by the nearby ruins of what used to be the second biggest hospital in town before it was destroyed.

Just behind it lie the headquarters of the Tsunami and Disaster Mitigation Research Center, itself a stern escape building whose garden is adorned by the carcass of a police helicopter mangled by the waves. Tasked with organizing the tsunami-preparedness educational programs at schools and community level, the Center is nonetheless chronically understaffed and short of money. Almost all its activities stopped in 2008, when donor funds ran out. To the worries of 28-year-old Program Manager Ella Meilianda, the local government doesn't seem interested in stepping in. "How will we prepare for future events?" she asks, clearly concerned. "We have to transfer knowledge to the younger generations".

The importance of it came to light in Simeulue, a small island off the west coast of Aceh which experienced a tsunami in 1907. There, local elders were able to transfer the knowledge of that event through oral traditions, allowing people to recognize the early signs of the 2004 one (namely the unusual receding of the sea water) and take shelter in time. As a result, the island lost only seven people out of a population of 78,000. When Banda Aceh experienced a strong, double earthquake in April 2012, few people used the escape buildings or followed the evacuation routes. Most of them tried to flee parallel to the coastline, resulting in huge traffic jams that could have led to complete disaster if another tsunami was on its way. Moreover, the early warning system didn't work properly, going off randomly and causing even more panic.

According to 40-year-old psychologist Yulia Direzkia, who did extensive research on the effects of the tsunami on the local population, part of the problem might have to do with the massive influx of foreign aid money and NGOs which took charge of most of the day-to-day reconstruction.

Although fundamental in tackling the unprecedented emergency in a short period of time, the practice didn't allow locals to fully participate in the post-tsunami management, creating a lack of responsibility which could be dangerous in the long-run. "After the 2006 earthquake in Yogyakarta [a city on the Indonesian island of Java, ndr], people rebuilt their houses themselves" explains Direzkia. "As a result, they became more knowledgeable and resilient than us".

THE TSUNAMI ALSO BROUGHT SOME POSITIVES. THE reconstruction effort spurred an unprecedented economic boom in a long-neglected and war-stricken region, creating business and employment opportunities for many locals. Yessi Kemala Dewi, a plump, vigorous young woman of 37 from the village of Padang Seurahet, is a living example of that.

As part of an economic empowerment programme run by a Swiss NGO, after the tsunami Dewi was provided with three sewing

machines.

Together with her two younger sisters, she set up a profitable business, which allowed the family to gain enough money to double the size of their house.

Today, half of the living room is occupied by the family workshop and the three sisters receive orders for curtains, bed covers and marriage tents from several clients all around the west coast of Aceh. "For us the tsunami was a blessing, even if it came at a hefty price" she says proudly. "We were able to send all our children to school".

The success wouldn't have been possible without the strong, mutual bond the sisters developed during the tsunami.

While they were trying to run away from the coastline, Dewi and her 31-year-old sister Fawzia were caught by the waves. A cabinet carried by the water hit Dewi from behind, trapping her leg. "I told Fawzia to go and save herself, but she didn't want to leave me there" she continues. "When the second wave arrived, we were both carried by the stream to the roof of a nearby house".

The pair remained there until late afternoon, when the level of the water finally started to descend. The ordeal they went through together further cemented the strong and intimate relationship. Fawzia was married and had her first baby two years ago;

Dewi, whose husband and eldest daughter survived the tsunami, gave birth to a boy two years later.

THE REGION HAS GONE BACK TO ITS QUIET, LAID BACK ATMOSPHERE, BUT THE OMNIPRESENCE OF NEW, MATCHBOX HOUSES REMIND YOU OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE WAVE

WITH THE RECONSTRUCTION bonanza over, the region has now gone back to a quiet, laid-back atmosphere. The trip from Banda Aceh through all the worst-affected areas along the west coast is now a heavenly ride among lush, tropical hills and pristine, untouched beaches, occasionally interrupted by some fishermen and villages. Although this paradise on earth hardly seems the theater of a deadly mother wave, the omnipresence of

the new matchbox houses give a taste of the magnitude of the tragedy.

Here, the government had initially proposed the creation of a two-kilometer buffer zone along low-lying coastal areas, but the plan was abandoned at the opposition of several coastal communities resolute to preserve their traditions and ancestral land.

Abandoning the sea was out of the question for them, no matter the risks.

After the initial shock, and despite the suffering it brought, most of the local fishermen returned to the ocean after a couple of years, renewing a relationship with the source of livelihood that characterized Aceh's whole history.

"The tsunami never changed my connection with the sea" confirms Nyong. "I love diving and fishing and I miss living close to it".

Now a security guard in a government office, the man never ceased to be a son of Ulee Lheue and the ocean. "When I was a kid, I used to live so close to the water I could almost jump in it from my window" he remembers, his eyes suddenly sparkled up by these sweet memories.

Resolute not to let the memory of his past fade away, he will soon visit Ulee Lheue again, this time bringing his 6-year-old kid. "I will take him to where my house was and to the beach" he explains. "I want him to know what happened".



A dark, artistic photograph of a person lying on a concrete surface. The person is positioned diagonally across the frame, with their legs bent and arms resting on their knees. The concrete surface has visible cracks and a rough texture. The word "PENTH" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

PENTH



HOUSE

coming soon to YouTube



HOLIDAYS IN CAMBODIA

If you don't enjoy sitting in the sun, drinking beer, swimming in the ocean, frolicking about with bikini-clad women, drinking some more beer, watching the cricket and ignoring your boss's texts during the summer, you could always go and shoot AK47s and Rocket Launchers with the Cambodian Army. That's the idea behind Steve Lee's "I Like Guns" tour, in which Lee, an Australian guns-rights activists, shooter and singer (check out his YouTube sensation, the appropriately named "I Like Guns") takes you on a trip through Cambodia, blowing stuff up and shooting endless rounds of ammunition.

The tour attracts a heap of the more clued-up Aussies, and for the latest tour, Penthouse tagged along. It was... well, explosive is probably the word for it.

We're not going to give too much away at the moment – check out the newly launched Penthouse YouTube channel for the video on Steve – but James Millynn managed to snap these amazing pics of a bunch of Aussies thoroughly enjoying their time with some very, very powerful weaponry.













OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS

ROB SCOTT HAS AN OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FIANCEE. IT'S A LOT OF FUN, BUT IT HAS ITS COMPLICATIONS.

“I just think your behaviour last night was disgusting.”
“Excuse me?”
“You really disrespected Ella, it was just... disgusting. I could tell that everyone was just so ashamed of you.”

I'm sitting, stunned, listening to my older brother's voice lecture me over the phone.

The “behaviour” he's talking about was the moment I kissed a girl on the dancefloor in front of my fiancée, before waving and saying “goodbye honey!” and leaving with said random girl back to her house to have sex.

You might think that's disgraceful behaviour too.

But after two and a half years of intense discussion, countless threesomes with various people, and finally, on the night in question, asking my fiancée for, and receiving, permission to go home with the girl in question, it's not exactly anyone else's business.

My brother's voice continued droning on, a monotonous stream of judgement spewing out of my phone like raw sewerage emptying into my living room.

The fact that I'd called him only made it worse; not only was there a river of raw fecal matter flowing into the house, it was like I'd specifically erected a sluice to let it in.

“Right, thanks for the advice, mate,” I said.

“I'm all for the open relationship thing, Rob, but keep it behind closed doors, dude. I can tell you really hurt Ella's feelings last night.”

“Well, Nic. I'm sitting with Ella, actually, we just had breakfast, and I'm pretty sure the only thing that's upsetting her is the unbearable sound of your voice, because I made the mistake of putting you on speaker phone.”

I hung up.

It would have been worth mentioning that my brother has cheated on every girl he's ever been with.

It would have been worth mentioning that my brother has consistently screwed women over, broken their hearts and left

"ELLA ALMOST BROKE DOWN WHEN SHE SAW ME GIVING JAMIE A PIGGYBACK DOWN THE STAIRS, DESPITE BEING TOTALLY UNFAZED ABOUT THE IDEA OF THE TWO OF US SCREWING LIKE DOGS."



them in a quivering heap because of his pathetic, narcissistic need for affection and his near sociopathic lack of empathy.

I didn't mention that to him, until he went and told my mum that I'd "cheated on Ella."

"I'm very upset with Rob," read Mum's text to Ella the following Saturday morning, as I lay with her head on one side of my chest and Jamie, a girl who Ella and I have been slowly developing a relationship with, on the other.

And so, in the middle of one of the happiest moments of my life, I had to write to my mum and explain that I hadn't "cheated" on Ella, that Ella had been made love to countless times by other men, that sometimes we have relationships with other people if we like them enough, and that we're happier, and more in love with each other than ever.

You know, just the kind of thing you want to be forced to tell your mum on a Saturday morning.

"Good luck with that. Bye," said Mum. She might be a philosophy graduate and a staunch atheist who preaches stoicism and flexible thinking, but I guess you just can't take the bigoted Catholic bitch out of a woman raised by nuns at Strathfield Girls High.

Ella is a much more reserved person than I am. Beautiful, intelligent, practical, funny, but shy. We balance each other out. Loud, flamboyant, utterly inappropriate. The centre of attention: That's me.

Because of her quieter nature, certain sections of our friendship circles are always striving to make sure Ella is "alright", with the way we live.

"Are you sure you're okay with that?"

"Do you want me to go and whisper in that girl's ear that she's a fucking slut? She'd back off if I did, just say the word."

On the surface, they mean well, but it's hard not to see the jealousy seething underneath.

And from Ella's point of view, it's incredibly condescending.

"Sometimes I just want to grab their faces and tell me to leave me the hell alone," said Ella to me, the morning after my 'disgraceful' behaviour.

"I mean, imagine if you had a gay couple, and one of them was real loud, real gay, real out, and the other one was a guy who basically seemed straight but he had made it clear to everyone that he was a homosexual."

"Imagine if every time they kissed each other, or felt each other up, or did anything remotely sexual in public, everyone crowded in on the straighter guy and started being like, 'are you sure you're gay?', 'Are you sure you're not being pressured into this?' I certainly understand where she's coming from. That said, to my knowledge, openly polyamorous individuals haven't been subjected to the systematic violence, oppression and discrimination that the gay community has endured.

But I can certainly see some social parallels.

Are our lives perfect? No. Jealousy, culturally, is a very difficult thing to overcome. We have rules in place and when they're broken, there's a price to be paid.

One night, I'd had some particularly bad

news and I screwed up.

I got really drunk, and Ella caught me having phone sex with a girl I'd only just met and who she hadn't 'cleared', so to speak. She'd wanted me to come to bed and cuddle her and I stayed up, pretending to be working, to talk dirty to some girl I'd met on Facebook. It was certainly a betrayal. And I paid for it.

Up until this point, too, our extra-curricular activity has been purely sexual. With Jamie coming into our lives, another element has been introduced. Although there's affection between the three of us, the romance is definitely strongest between Jamie and I.

And there have been moments when, despite all our trust, jealousy has reared its ugly head again.

Ella almost broke down when she told me how she'd felt seeing me giving Jamie a piggyback down the stairs, despite being totally unfazed about the idea of the two of us screwing like dogs.

Ultimately, this kind of relationship can only survive on a foundation of trust, communication, and continuous dialogue.

Funnily enough, the only person who truly understands the way we live has been my Dad.

"Do what you like, mate. I'll always support the two of you. Don't listen to your mother and brother, they're dickheads. And I'd love to take you, and Ella, and your new girlfriend out to dinner. She sounds lovely."

Thanks, Dad. You can't fuck either of them though. There some lines even we won't cross. 



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barely covering girls since 1994



SUN, SEX AND SALT

**ARTIST TOM FERSON
TAKES OLD SOFTCORE
PORN MAGAZINES AND
TURNS THEM INTO
SOMETHING NEW.**

If there is a particular impression one gets from looking at the work of Tom Ferson, it is the smell of musty '70s magazines. Evocative of sipping a brandy in a wood-paneled library, or fish and chips after a surf, Ferson's images have a familiarity about them.

"I have a substantial collection of old pornography and assorted soft-core photographic publications from the '60s and '70s" he says. "I see the women in these magazines as possessing a healthy natural beauty, a look seemingly not there in today's media."

Ferson is attracted to the aesthetic of bygone days, citing their particular quality of light and a grain only granted to them by photographic processes no longer in popular use.

Replicating these aspects and working from his own photographs, Ferson assimilates the two strands of reference sources into some beautiful images.

"Each artwork begins with a concept: a technique I would like to employ, a mood I would like to evoke, or a story I would like to tell, or a combination of all three. Occasionally I'll get out a stack of old magazines I've collected over the years, and just peruse until an image strikes me. Some concepts are born as a reaction to a found

image, whereas others come to me when I'm not looking for them, and then require the right image to be utilised to convey them."

The results are, well... kind of awesome, to be honest. At Penthouse, we've recently developed an obsession with old-school nude photography from the '60s, '70s and '80s. The look of film, with its bright colours and grainy atmosphere, just has a special quality about it that you can't capture on today's ultra-hi-def digital devices, despite all those Instagram filters.

In fact, we used a whole series of those very shots in this month's "Endless Summer" section.

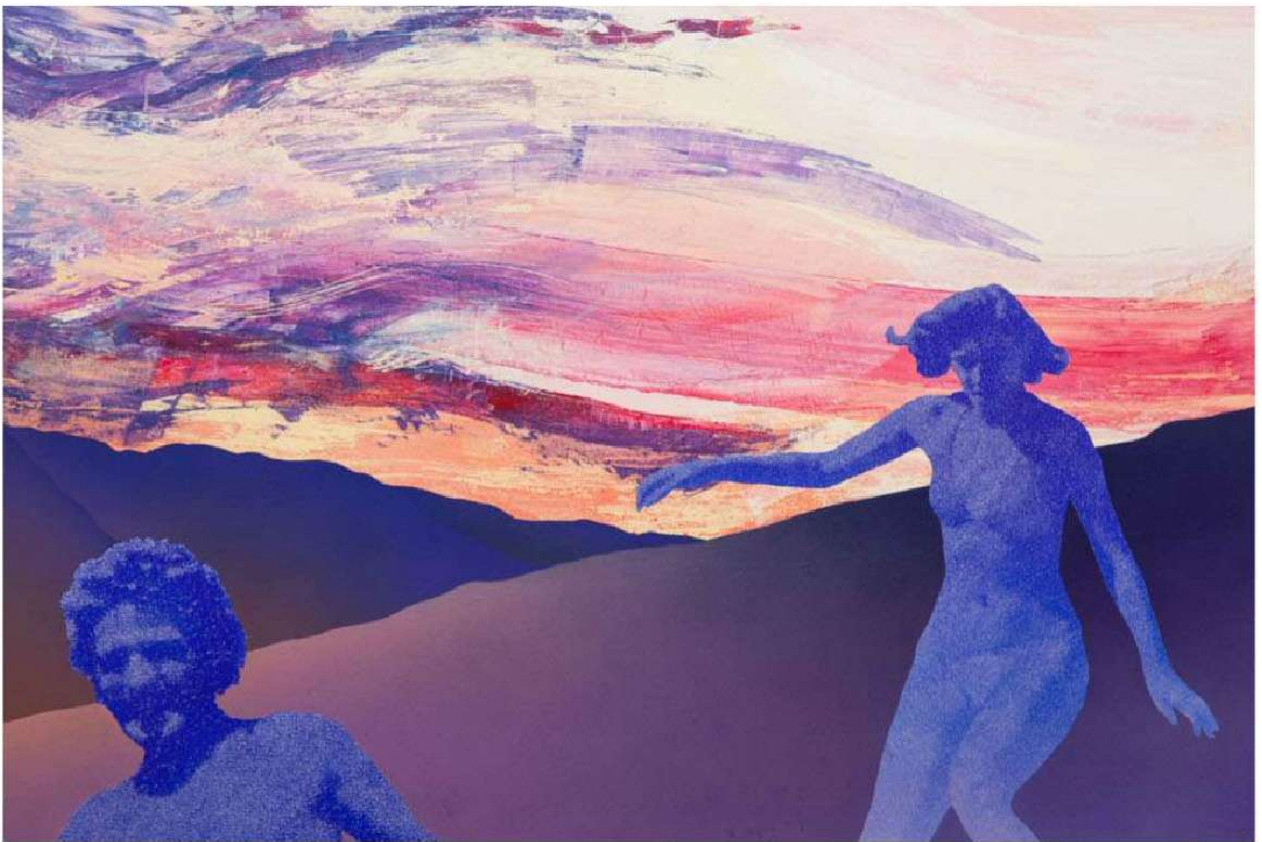
It's why Ferson's artwork caught our eye.

Many contemporary artists are social butterflies, hopping from event to event, indulging in the schmooze, but Ferson is a single-minded studio warrior, and the outcome of this dedication shines bright.

"I've had to make sacrifices to support my work," he says.

"Most people won't live off a passion because they are locked into a societal construct and don't see any other way. Most don't know the meaning of dedication or sacrifice."

Well, thanks for the sacrifice, Mr Ferson. We certainly enjoy the results. 









WHY ARE SO MANY WOMEN ATTRACTED TO ASSHOLES?

Just like 7 million people on Facebook, 6 million on Instagram and the entire city of Las Vegas, the Penthouse team maintains an ardent fascination with Dan Bilzerian.

And how could you not, really? He's a trust-fund-supported professional poker player with an enthusiasm for women rivalled only by his hyper-enthusiasm for guns and his ultra-enthusiasm for cocaine.

We're talking about a man who was arrested during his senior year of high school for having a machine gun on school property here.

If you were searching for a symbol of the excess inherent in modern Western culture, Dan Bilzerian would tick all your boxes.

Well, he'd most certainly tick my box, anyway. But when I mentioned offhandedly to the three "men" I work with that I'd really, really like Dan Bilzerian to fuck me like a sock and then throw me away, I was met with looks of mingled disappointment and total outrage.

It's rather difficult to win the understanding of a group of guys when you're stuttering, "No no no, I just mean that I really like the idea of him masturbating with my body and then tossing me aside like wet garbage".

They were not pleased. Least of all Will Colvin, who insists upon the term "happy wife, happy life" and enjoys spending \$800 a month on gifts for his girlfriend. For decent gentlemen who have been raised their entire lives to respect women and – yes – treat them like actual human beings, hearing such a blasé dismissal of self-worth coming out of my mouth is appalling.

But I am absolutely a feminist. I am always more than happy to fight the good fight when issues of gender-based discrimination pop up. I also frequently get quite drunk and shout accusations of misogyny at men in bars (as well as my long-suffering boyfriend).

I believe absolutely in equality of the sexes, and therein lies the contradiction: why is it that I am intuitively attracted to the

idea of being treated like shit when my intellect condemns such treatment?

I want a long-term partner that I can rely on. I want a man whom I can envision as a father and who'll do lovely things like finger me and take me out to dinner. But equally, I want a man who plainly does not care about my feelings, makes me cry and then violently fucks me against the wall.

It's a paradox. Most people would be tempted to sum it up with the words "DADDY ISSUES", but my father has been a completely present and admirable male figure my entire life. As far as I know our weekly Scrabble tournaments are not influencing my emotional masochism (but hey, I'm no scientist).

So why am I so keen on the idea of being treated like absolute dirt? Partly what I experience must be explainable by an attraction to excitement and drama. The romanticisation of emotional devastation was a pretty consistent theme in the films and television that I was most attracted to as a kid – that's what you get for watching the entire Six Feet Under series more than ten times, I suppose.

I don't have a white picket fence fantasy. The concept of settling down in the 'burbs with a banker and making small talk with the neighbours

until I gradually disintegrate is a profoundly more hellish scenario to me than being treated badly ever could be.

Subconsciously craving the 'beautiful drama' pushes me to believe that when men do outrageously mean things to me and make me cry, that's A-okay because that's what good love is supposed to be.

And that is a really scary conclusion to reach.

However, the picture is obviously more complicated than casually blaming HBO. I know this because I'm not alone in these desires. A lot of women experience the same irrational inclination towards men that display personality traits largely thought to be socially undesirable. 🔑

IF YOU WERE SEARCHING FOR A SYMBOL OF WESTERN CULTURE'S EXCESSES, DAN BILZERIAN WOULD TICK ALL YOUR BOXES. HE CERTAINLY TICKS MINE



COCAINE

Despite costing over 300 dollars in Australia for one single gram (a friend told us – we wouldn't know, because we're totally upstanding citizens) cocaine use has seen a massive rise in Australia over the last ten years. It's the party drug of choice, so we thought we'd take a look at the weird history of Charlie.

South American indigenous communities have been chewing on the coca leaf for thousands of years. The effects of chewing the leaf is a mild buzz – pretty much anything you're doing becomes a little bit more awesome, but you don't get really high and start doing crazy stuff like Charlie Sheen.

When the Spanish thought it would be an amazing idea to invade large swathes of South America during the 1400s and name it the personal property of the Spanish King, they also swiftly declared chewing coca to be the work of the devil and outlawed it.

Presumably they hadn't tried the stuff at that point because as soon as the occupiers gave it a shot they declared it to

In the late nineteenth century people were even using coke to treat morphine addiction. Smart move, junkies.

In fact, there were some incredibly prominent cocaine aficionados back in the day. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was a rather enthusiastic member of the cocaine community. He even wrote a short book – *Über Coca* – espousing its virtues. Freud loved “experimenting” with the drug, trying out various doses and methods of administration on himself. All in the name of scientific research, of course.

Then there was Pope Leo XIII. Old Leo was made Pope in 1878 at the age of 68, and lasted almost 30 years as kingpin of Catholicism on a diet of a cocaine-infused French wine called Vin Mariani. There's even a newspaper ad dated 1899 featuring Pope Leo's smiling mug endorsing Vin Mariani. Go Leo!

So, as with all things amazing and fun, the government had to get involved and put a stop to it all because, well, nobody wants citizens having fun now do they? And yes, your government

WHEN THE SPANISH DECIDED TO WIPE OUT ALL OF SOUTH AMERICA, THEY DECLARED COCA TO BE THE WORK OF THE DEVIL

be incredible (not officially – the Spanish government started touting it's “medicinal” purposes) and began to tax its growth.

Once knowledge of the plant seeped back into Europe, chemists quickly began to try their darndest to isolate the active alkaloid (the stuff that gets you high). Trouble was that these “chemists” lived back in late medieval times and were therefore... kinda stupid.

So, after a few centuries of making do with chewing on the coca plant, a German scientist named Friedrich Gaedcke (don't ask us how to pronounce that last name) finally managed to isolate the alkaloid, and in 1856 another German chemist named Friedrich Wohler ordered a motherload of coca leaves from South America. The purification process had begun.

Thanks, Germany.

Western medicine was rather quick to get into the new substance, prescribing it for everything from toothaches to dandruff (!) as well as putting it to good commercial use in wine and, yes, eventually Coca Cola.

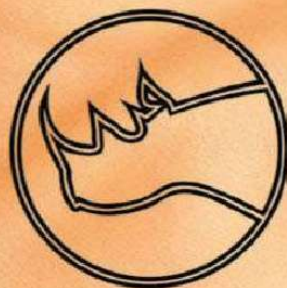
knows best, even though the rise of problem drug use can be almost directly tracked to it's criminalization.

By the late 1970s, cocaine had taken over as the scary drug of choice, and people like Pablo Escobar began to get incredibly rich by supplying disco-loving Americans with their regular fix. Some say Escobar was the richest man in the world during the eighties.

The fact is that, whilst it most definitely is an addictive and dangerous substance if taken regularly, coke is nowhere near as dangerous as tobacco, alcohol, amphetamines and even sugar.

But that hasn't stopped the powers that be from doing their best to drive it underground.

In 1995 a World Health Organisation and United Nations study was immediately banned and censored by numerous governments because it seemed to make a case for cocaine having some positive uses. BECAUSE IF WE CAN'T TAX IT, IT MUST BE BAAAAAD. ☹️



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